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Men of the Kingdom

Wycliffe: The Morning Star

By

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To My Mother

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FOREWORD

FROM the very nature of the series this volume makes no pretense to be a critical life of Wycliffe. The author may express the hope that it does not entirely lack the ear-marks of a student. The five hundredth anniversary of Wycliffe's death led to a searching study of that period of English history, and to a carefully revised edition of his works. One of the results was the publishing of several excellent biographies, Sergeant's, Wilson's, Lane-Poole's, and that mine of information, Trevelyan's England in the Age of Wycliffe. From all these and the histories of the period I have stolen with a large hand; not without trying however to follow Horace's dictum—to remint the coin. The records of this period are not abundant, so that the author must supply in some measure the setting. The scientific method of historical study is very valuable for the ascertaining of facts and dates, but popular histories and biographies at least should be written

and read with a generous dose of the imagination. It is an accepted maxim that a great man's life can not be adequately portrayed in prose, it requires the poetic diction and spirit. In this volume I have simply tried to answer the question: What would a busy, earnest man want to know about John Wycliffe and his work?

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Wycliffe: The Morning Star

CHAPTER I.

THE MORNING STAR.

To FULLY appreciate the title given to Wycliffe —the Morning Star—one needs to arise early and get in touch with the spirit of the morning—the delightful stillness, the great expanse of the eastern heavens, its edge just touched with the coming dawn, the thin crescent of the waning moon, the other stars gathered about the harbinger of day, the first streaks of light in the east, the gradual waking of the world, the crowing of the first cock, the chirping of the birds, and then the glad roundelay, the smoke rising from the chimneys and at last the blowing of the factory whistle, which indicates that the world is awake and at its daily task. In going back to the fourteenth century, the twilight of the modern era, we must be awake, our eyes well opened, with a morning dip and a vigorous rub down, to catch the new stir, the spirit of the early morning that speaks only to a live soul. In studying a past age, and particularly the life

and work of a really great man, we need all the faculties of the mind aroused, our sympathies strong, our prejudices held in leash, and our judgment vigorous and unbiased. In this spirit it will be a pleasure to study the life of him who was the first of the great reformers; the first not only in time, but in insight and purpose and courage, a mighty man of valor, our race leader in the long struggle against ecclesiastical corruption and tyranny.

There is a peculiar significance in Paul's expression: "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son." That is the time when God-chosen men appear. The same wise providence which creates the need for a popular leader, also prepares that leader for the occasion. His work, too, is measured not by his ability merely, but by the readiness of the people to hear and profit by his message. Such leaders are in large measure the products of their times, not springing from the head of Zeus fully armed, as leaders sometimes seem, but from a long period of silent preparation, like the century plant gathering for years the peculiar force which blossoms into magnificent flower. Yet in larger measure they are also the molders of their own and succeeding times. Like the Sea of Galilee which gathers up the waters of the streams to the North and pours them out into the swiftly rushing Jordan River, so these men gather up the various and often contra-

dictory forces of their times, and combine them into a mighty stream of general progress. The people of Thessalonica described them as: "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." They are the great-souled heroes who redeem their age from littleness, who cause us to stretch ourselves as a boy with growing pains, and make it seem a bigger thing to be a man.

So largely does the world depend upon these men at each stage of its forward movement, that clear-sighted investigators see in them as a class certain well-defined characteristics. They seem to have even a bodily likeness; rather spare, apparently tall, straight, broad-browed, keen eyes, firm lips, determined chin, an appearance of strength and leadership. Much more do they resemble each other in spiritual likeness, in clearness of insight, in determined purpose, in strength of conviction, in resolute will, in devotion to truth, in sincerity of heart, in depth of religious fervor, in open-mindedness, in sympathy for all classes of men. They seem to be even name-sakes, so many of them being called John, according no doubt to the word of the angel to Zacharias; John Chrysostom, John Wycliffe, John Huss, John Milton, John Knox, John Calvin, John Bunyan, and John Wesley. Martin Luther, the greatest of all the reformers differs somewhat from the rest in name and bodily form, but the spiritual likeness is there in all its force.

These men, like their Master, are found worthy to open the seals, to declare to men the counsels of God; men of vigorous personality, able to set the soul on fire and quicken it with divine truth.

It takes in some respects a peculiar kind of mind to appreciate Wycliffe and his work. It is a question whether it does not take the same quality of manhood as the reformers themselves possessed, a similarity of temperament, insight and judgment, to appreciate their characteristics and really do them honor. In studying the life of a race hero, or a man of the kingdom, to get the real benefit or to learn the lesson intended, we must see his life's work so clearly that as in looking at a picture it will stir our emotions, quicken our impulses, be life-enhancing to us. Mr. Berensen, in his art works, says: "In looking at the picture of The Wrestlers, we must feel our own muscles tighten, our breath come more quickly, our whole nature respond to the effort expressed in the scene before us, till we feel as if the elixir of life, not our own sluggish blood, were coursing through our veins." In studying the work of a great man we must feel his life, must sympathize with him, his struggles ours, his defeats ours, his victories ours, his crown the promise and model of our own. Such a one is our protagonist on the great battlefield of the reformation, of the intellectual and moral renaissance, and his worth to us is in the quickened nature that comes from contact with him.

The disposition to honor and glorify the name of Wycliffe is a good omen for our age and race. As the morning star he still points to the now rapidly coming day of spiritual enlightenment and freedom. We can not all be great, but we can all love greatness, courage, moral strength, truth, beauty, a purposeful life. We can be touched by the great on the many sides of our being, spirit answering to spirit, and in this appreciation of nobility lies our greatness, the most valuable quality we can possess. In those sixty years of remarkable development of genius at Athens, the names of whose great men crowd the Classical Dictionary, alertness, intelligence, sympathy of the people, responded to the inspiration of the artist or poet, and made the atmosphere in which he could reach his best fruitage. So long as humanity loves noble men and is proud of their deeds, so long will the human race move onward and upward. Oliver Wendell Holmes represents the great men of the world gathered on pillars around a central statue, that of the Son of man, and on one of the highest of these we will place John Wycliffe, our John.

By the largeness of his nature and his intense sympathy Wycliffe understood the drift of English public opinion, was in spiritual affinity with it, and expressed it so clearly and forcibly that the people recognized it as their own. A great man is one who can see the ideas prevalent in his age, who gathers up its thoughts, feelings, sympathies,

tendencies, and expresses them in a way to bring the more advanced thought, the larger life. Or to be more rhetorical, he is the protagonist for the host of advancing warriors for the truth and right, as Achilles the leader of the Greeks, against the Trojan walls of tradition and authority. The landed aristocracy of England claimed with some show of reason to be the natural representatives of the English people, but with a few noble exceptions they have proven false to their trust. The real natural leaders have been the men who were in heart and soul English, representing the spirit and aims and moral aspirations of their countrymen and embodying them in their lives. As Abraham Lincoln was the American people, not only that he represented the American people in some indefinite way, but that in character and aspirations and impulses he was the American people, as no other man of the nineteenth century was; so with Wycliffe, he was the English people of the age, not of the clergy or upper classes, but of all classes, the richest embodiment of their aims and feelings, their intellectual and religious life.

For centuries the Church misjudged the spirit of Wycliffe's work, and as the records were mostly from his enemies or the ecclesiastical party, the English Church did little to honor him. It was almost four hundred years after his death before men began to understand his relations to English history, and to do justice to the great-souled leader

who supplied the philosophical and Scriptural basis for the Reformation. Wycliffe was the greatest of the pre-reformers, in moral courage, in comprehension of the vital points at issue, in marking the line to which later workmen might hew. Milton said: "He was honored of God to be the first preacher of a general reformation to all Europe." Of the English Reformation he determined the course and the spirit, making it the clearest in purpose, the most enduring in its object, the most efficient in final victory. Then, too, the vital figures in those early times stand out like the shadowy forms from the reflection of the sun on the Hartz Mountains, and seem like Bunyan's Great-Heart, champions whose prowess we admire and in whose valor and goodness we dare trust.

Those critics are right who see in Wycliffe's work the harbinger of Teutonic Christianity. From his ancestry and his temperament he was the exponent of the Teutonic reformation. Bismarck said: "We Germans fear God alone." They worship GOD writ large, as over against man-made perils or superstitions. A clearer, more vital idea of God, always means a reformation, a quickening of the intellectual and moral life. By his intellectual grasp and force of character Wycliffe not only determined the aim and means of the later English reform, but also the political and religious development of the Teutonic races. He represented the Anglo-Saxon elements in English character, its

energy, its perseverance, its love of truth, its depth of reverence, "the martyr spirit which can die but not yield." So forceful was his life that as with the prophet's body in days of old, it seems as if one's soul would be quickened into more vigorous activity by touching the bones of a man who had lived so intensely.

Perhaps we ought not to blame the English hierarchy too severely for not being able to observe the signs of the times. There is a peculiar virulence in ecclesiastical hatred which makes it impossible to appreciate an opponent's work. The largest and stiffest blinkers are on ecclesiastical bridles, and the shut-out world is absolutely non-existent. Prelates and popes, nobles and kings, obscured and distorted the work of Wycliffe for centuries, but the English Reformation came, and the significance of the morning star is at last apparent to a grateful world. There is joy in heaven, too, over the man who will do his work as God appoints it, caring not for honor, wealth or advancement, so that he may finish his course according to the Divine will. As Jeremiah was to seek in the broad places of Jerusalem, so the Holy Spirit is constantly searching in the broad places of the earth for men—men like Wycliffe, who will execute judgment and seek the truth; men who have the force of character and the manliness to do his will, who will not be disobedient to the heavenly vision as it appears to them on the lonely way to Damascus. Blessed are

the overcomers in the field where God has called them, for they shall be the inheritors of this world and the next—men who conquer themselves, their appetites, their passions, their laziness, their ignorance, their temper, and then go forth like great-souled heroes to help mankind in its struggle upwards.

CHAPTER II.

PREPARATION.

To UNDERSTAND the work of any man it is essential for us to reconstruct in our imagination the vital influences in his life, and particularly in his boyhood, when sentiments and character are formed so rapidly. The entire fourteenth century is one of the most obscure in all history, exact dates and facts and tendencies being difficult to determine. This is especially true of Wycliffe's early life. The age of childhood had not come. The precocious acts and sayings of children were not published for the edification of parents and teachers. The two or three incidents we have of the early life of Jesus are of priceless value to us. If we only had a few scraps of Wycliffe's boyhood life, that list of anecdotes which prefigure the coming greatness, we might judge how his ideals and ambitions were formed. The fact is he seems to have grown up just as many a thoughtful boy has done before and since. He got a good preparation, and when his work came he did it.

Even the birth-place of Wycliffe is a matter of contention among his biographers. They are fairly well agreed that he was born near an old

Richmond, probably at Ipswell or Spresswell, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, on the border of the County of Durham. The old manor house, the home of the Wycliffes, still stands on the banks of the Tees. Near it on a grassy bank above the river is the parish church, where Wycliffe got his early theological training. About five miles distant are the ruins of Barnard Castle, the ancient home of the House of Balliol, one of whose members became king of Scotland by Edward First's decision. The surrounding country is varied and beautiful, just such as to appeal to the sensitive spirit of young Wycliffe, as the valley of Erfurt did to Luther, or the Esdraelon Valley to Jesus of Nazareth. The ruins of castles and towers, recalling the deeds of his ancestors, the streams with the enticing waterfalls, where the eddies played hide and seek among the rocks, the hills which his youthful bones ached to climb, the beautiful valleys with their shady nooks, the great woods, the hedge rows, the birds and the flowers, helped to excite his imagination, and to make his mind active and well directed. The first few sections of Scott's Rokeby describe the natural beauty of the country, and certainly it is a place where heroes might be bred.

We do not know the date of Wycliffe's birth, somewhere between 1320 and 1325. It was probably near the earlier date, but as Mark Twain says, such minor matters need not detain us. He was evidently a quick, intelligent, thoughtful, noble-

minded boy, who felt the call of the world for a strong manhood and faithful work. As lords of the manor of Wycliffe the family had many advantages, being in that most favorable of all conditions, neither in poverty nor in riches, but with opportunities for development and with a deep sense of its need. The people of the neighborhood were industrious, vigorous, lovers of justice, sincere in their dealings with God and man. The Wycliffes (there are some fifty ways of spelling the name), belonged not to the Norman but to the older nobility, with Anglo-Saxon blood and spirit, to the race who were remolding their country's thought and institutions, with English language and customs and national spirit. With their Teutonic blood they inherited a sturdiness of character, honesty, clear-sightedness, with a strong devotion to morality and justice, the leaders of the people who always long for the establishment on earth of the kingdom of righteousness. The freedom of the old Germanic forests, developed by breasting the billows of the North Sea, and the love of independence of the British Isles, made England the leader in political and religious liberty, until the blind selfishness of her nobility robbed her of the latter honor.

Young Wycliffe had a religious disposition, a philosophical temperament, a devotion to the things of the mind. His own inclination and the wise choice of his parents, made him a student. As he was like Joseph, considerable of a dreamer, he was

probably considered good for nothing else. He lacked the robust physique necessary for a soldier or a man of affairs, but he might do for a priest. He certainly had the advantage of school during his young boyhood, and was alive to his opportunities. His daily teachers were the delightful forms of English scenery, the landscapes, hills and valleys, the woodlands, meadows and streams, the thousand incidents of rural life, which responded to and stimulated his earnestness and simplicity. He attended school probably at the neighboring abbey of Egglestone, getting as many a boy has done a large part of his education on the way to school. He studied no doubt a little Latin and Church history and music, less of mathematics and science. His later proficiency in the use of the English language betokens early drill in his mother tongue. A modest, faithful priest taught him the simple faith of the Gospel, belief in Christ and love for man. This priest we may believe, was a real teacher, a live soul, able to quicken a soul, whose heart was filled with delight, as he read his pupil's future in the light of his own hopes. Love for the poor was the passion of Wycliffe's life, and he must have learned it in youth. His young, eager soul was stirred by the suffering and misfortunes of his poorer neighbors, and by the exactions of the tithes to swell the luxury of the higher clergy while the needy parishioners were left to starve. Fortunately for himself and the world he early saw life from

the best vantage ground, in touch with the common people, their simple tastes and needs and hopes, with eyes unglazed with the glare of wealth and power. The old dialect of that age has lingered on in North England, and the peculiar temperament too. When recently a portion of Wycliffe's writings was read to a few people, a young man from Yorkshire cried out: "Why, that is our speech."

The family standing, he being the son of an English squire, made it possible for young Wycliffe to go to college. That was the open door to his becoming a man of the Kingdom. We would like to know what kind of a lad he was, as, say in his fifteenth year, he went to Oxford. What were his youthful dreams and ideals, his way of looking at the world, the things that really stirred his imagination? We know that he was an intelligent boy, a diligent, eager student, with a thirst for knowledge, and a nobility of soul that would select the highest things for its food. In the century preceding there had been a great intellectual awakening, a great movement of the young men to the universities, which in time meant a new Europe and a new civilization. The English young men were not treated well at Paris during the Hundred Years' War, so Edward I improved and stimulated the growth of Oxford, and turned the tide of popularity to it. It was already in Wycliffe's day a famous university with thousands of students, and with a series of great men as teachers. We would like to have

seen the quaint old mediæval town, with its picturesque houses and churches, and the rude college halls in which intellectual eagerness was shaking the torch of truth to give it brighter flame.

There were only five colleges then, Balliol, Merton, Exeter, Oriel and University. They were originally founded for the benefit of poor scholars, but in the end were usurped by the rich or well-born. A large part of the students depended on charity, numbers being supported by donations from the chest of St. Frideswyde, the patron saint of Oxford and its students. The Church, too, was in need of educated young men, and offered means of help and an open door to position to any promising boy. There were no examinations to terrify the sensitive matriculant, the well of knowledge being free to all, whether he brought a barrel or a pint cup. In those early days life in the college halls was barbarous. Many of the scholars begged their way to Oxford where they had the roughest fare, shared their room and bed with others, and with no books to aid them. Whatever manuscripts the university had were kept in the chilly rooms of the monasteries. The professor lectured to a mixed class of all ages and acquirements in an ill-lighted room, without fire to warm or benches to relieve their weary bodies. Though the students' life was hard, their fare coarse, their clothing scanty, with three or four in a room, yet the colleges produced a large proportion of the men who honored and enriched

their age. They were heroic men of humble birth, often the less vigorous sons of the squires and merchants, yet they studied diligently, and reaped the opportunities which diligent work always brings.

Besides these representatives of the burghers and yeomen there were enough scions of the upper class to teach young Wycliffe the character and aspirations of the feudal nobility, and to help make him afterwards their adviser and defender on the field of national politics. He was associated at Oxford with some of the best scholars, the future leaders in thought and activity, as in later times Gladstone and Ruskin were. The students were divided into two nations, as they were called, the Boreales, coming from the North of England, and the Australes, coming from the South. To prepare them for war against the French these two nations were at constant feud, so that the university was compelled to appoint two proctors to keep them in somewhat decent bounds in their college scraps. These conflicts probably were connected with political and religious differences, the South supporting the papacy and established institutions, the North breathing a more independent spirit. Balliol College, which Wycliffe entered, became the focus of Northern sentiment, and in this militant atmosphere the young student was trained to be the champion of truth and righteousness for the whole kingdom.

Oxford as a town was a populous center, a

market for the neighboring farmers and a purveyor for the universtiy's physical needs. In those good old times there was constant warfare between the students and the town people; the students complaining of the extortionate prices for food and lodging, and the unsanitary condition of the town; while the citizens complained of the lawlessness and violence of the students, of insults to worthy burghers and the destruction of their shops. Unfortunately both sides had only too much reason for their complaints. The students were under the protection not only of the Church and State in England, but were the special wards of the pope himself, and hence their persons and their privileges were peculiarly sacred. The Jews were forbidden to exact more than forty-three per cent on loans to the students, and the chancellor was given control over the price of bread and beer, over the streets, taxes and weights. It was a great time and place for scraps, between the Northern and Southern students, the friars and the secular clergy, the artists and the jurists—as the students of the arts and the law were called—the nominalists and the realists, the English and the Welsh, Scotch or Irish, and the fiercest of all, the scholars and the town people. On St. Scholastica's Day, Feb. 10, 1354, the citizens, aided by the rustics of the neighborbood, were summoned by the bell at St. Martin's, the students by the bell at St. Mary's, to a terrific battle. Three gownmen taken prisoners were hanged by the en-

raged populace. For this high-handed violation of university rights the townmen were compelled to come without hats, cloaks or shoes to the grave, and to bury with their own hands the three martyred students. We do not believe in these strifes, or in a young Freshman climbing the college tower to place his class flag on the topmost pinnacle, but it is out of such stuff that English and American heroes are made.

Wycliffe at Oxford was a diligent student, his eyes were open, his spirit receptive, his powers of acquisition vigorous. He studied first no doubt the Trivium—grammar, dialectics, rhetoric—the students of which were called logici. He must have done his work well, for he became one of the most astute logicians Oxford ever produced. The granting of college degrees was fashioned upon the form of bestowing knighthood, the young aspirant kneeling before the chancellor to receive the accolade. To carry out the similarity the candidate went to the college chapel, and, standing before the altar, challenged any one to meet him in disputation on his chosen theme; many a later student taking the precaution to have the door securely locked before he issued his defiance. There was a narrow range of subjects, with no Greek, and little or nothing in the native tongue. As to science, Roger Bacon, the great master in that sphere, was considered to be in league with the devil. Still in touch with men and an atmosphere of thought Wycliffe's spirit was

quickened. He learned to think, to reflect, to form judgments and to substantiate them. From the Trivium he went to the Quadrivium, they together forming the seven liberal arts, the seven pillars which Proverbs tells us Wisdom hath hewn out for her house. He passed on to moral philosophy, metaphysics, but particularly to theology, which was then counted the queen of the sciences, and opened the way for the use of all a young man's talents. The priesthood was the avenue to preferment above any other calling, the highest offices in Church or State were open to the clergy, and the ecclesiastical statesmen of that age were leaders in English national life.

Wycliffe, we may be sure, soon became deeply immersed in the studies of the Schoolmen, for in that atmosphere would be his special delight. The Doctor's degree, received after his course in theology, gave him greater intellectual freedom, boldness and influence, and the right to lecture on divinity. To become a regent master he must lecture two years, forty days of which must be given to disputation; a good way to manufacture live students into heretics and leaders of thought. Systematic theology consisted in the expounding of the sentences of Peter Lombard, which sharpened the wits, but ignored the Bible and practical wisdom. The Bible was in the Latin Vulgate, the explanations were brief, in the form of aphorisms, and the critical exposition was in the form of sentences or

carefully formulated statements. The students in theology studied not the teachings of Christ or Paul, but Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, as we now study Wesley and Miley. Wycliffe's lectures aided the growth and crystallization of his views, the statement and restatement clarifying them both for himself and his students.

Oxford University was then as generally in its history noted for independence, for freedom of thought and courage in stating conclusions. On account of their liberalism, or lack of devotion to the king against the people, Henry III threatened to hang all the students, but graciously concluded to pardon them to become still more independent, or traitors to established authority. Many of the higher officials were naturally conservative, yet live fellows and students like Wycliffe kept a liberal spirit which dared to think and attack any traditional views whatsoever. The conservatism of a college ought not to be so stiff, or the liberalism so radical, as in other places, but the conclusions should be surer and more firmly held. The power also to govern one's self and others is born at college, the spirit of self-direction, which excludes all littleness or meanness of spirit, and gives tone to one's life somewhat in accord with the great truths with which it is becoming familiar. The founding of the universities in Europe meant reform sooner or later, for truth will lead its followers like a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to

the land of freedom, and intellectual and moral strength. It was perfectly natural that the Renaissance should lead to the Reformation.

Like many other profoundly learned men Wycliffe lingered at Oxford long after obtaining his degree, working for other degrees, and storing his mind with serviceable knowledge. He became the most learned man in England, the most subtle and powerful dialectician, a master of both civil and canon law, fully equipped for a life of intellectual effort. It is necessary to give the faculties time to develop, and if this is done in a favorable atmosphere like that of Oxford the mind is made comprehensive and strong. It is interesting to note how many of the recent authors have spent several years at Oxford or Cambridge after graduation, gathering stores of knowledge which they have used in after works. Graduates are just ready to begin to study, as the full grown bee to gather honey. Wycliffe's literary work shows that the product of a mind well stored by research and reflection has a distinctive relish about it that only the learned atmosphere can give. The modern doctrine of apperception comes in here, for to get the mastery of knowledge we must not only learn it, but study it, till we see its relation to other knowledge, see its bearing on all knowledge, get so acquainted with it that we can use it readily when the occasion comes. Then there is an inspiration about the old college halls where the footsteps of great men have

trod, which are hallowed by the memories of great deeds wrought, where men are quickened by and with the really great, who have been educated within its walls. A student learns there the benefit of reverence for noble character, somewhat of the value of hero worship, the upilfting tendency of high and noble ideals. We, like Wycliffe, are to a certain extent the sum of our heroes, the combination of the men we have learned to admire and to follow.

Wycliffe found too at Oxford the latest speculations, the latest theories of life's manifold relations, and the latest criticism of systems of thought and government. All things were put under the intellectual microscope, examined and re-examined, until a form was given to statements of truth which the mind of the age could accept. Life at a quiet university like Oxford furnished an excellent place for thought, study, meditation, the forming of ideas, the changing of opinions into convictions which distinguish the broadly and deeply educated man. The largest and best equipped libraries were there, and the company of learned men, those in the professors' chairs and those entombed in books, strengthened the mental grasp of the students and quickened their ambition for higher things. All theories and speculations were grist for their mill—they learned to think, on right lines, to some purpose and with definite results. Wycliffe by his twenty years' diligent study at Oxford became a

deep scholar, a distinguished university professor, with a well-stored mind, profoundly devoted to great principles and willing to give his life for them. In his lectures and other writings at Oxford he prepared the substance of his later work, the teaching which he gave to his poor priests, and which they in turn were to give to the people in their sermons. He there acquired, as so many men do, the power to see how things relate themselves to other things, that quality which we call wisdom or judgment, which distinguishes a wise man with plenty of common sense from the chump.

CHAPTER III.

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

As Wycliffe was about to become a world figure it will be well to take a survey of the political condition of Europe. That we may rightly gauge the significance of a man we must first of all get an accurate idea of his relation to his times, the historical setting which is the true key to his character and influence. For the last twenty years historians have been greatly interesed in the Middle Ages, rightly seeing in them the beginning of modern customs and streams of thought. Like the Book of Genesis or young manhood, the Mediæval Age is full of the beginning of things, the most interesting period of growth and development. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were periods of intellectual awakening, the lazy old world shaking itself like a sleepy giant aroused from his slumber. If we imagine that the fourteenth century was the time, not of the stage coach compared with our electric cars, but of the old rickety ox cart creeping along at snail's pace, we ourselves want to wake up. Rather, if we get in touch with its spirit, it was the nineteenth century of mediæval Europe, the period when things were moving, a great rest-

less sea, in which forces were at work preparing for the new era that was pushing itself forward in spite of popes and priests, and sometimes of kings and people. It was a time of transformation, of the early renaissance, of theological questionings and doubts, of political readjustment, of the awakening of Europe and the spirit of nationality. It was the meeting-point of the mediæval and the modern, when the ideas and the spirit of the modern world were first thrilling the minds of men with a fresh and intenser life. "The shadow of the great Hildebrand had rested heavily on the Western world for over two centuries," giving to tradition and authority despotic control of all intellectual activity. Only the awakened conscience of Europe, and the new spirit of national revolt against ecclesiastical absolutism and corruption could dispel it. But the papacy was ceasing to be the center of European thought, and national politics and welfare were looming large on the Eastern horizon.

While Wycliffe was at Oxford getting his sword sharpened and his shield hardened, many interesting things were happening in the great world outside. There was a vast seething all over Europe, an intense and prolonged struggle in the readjustment of political and religious forces, as they passed from the mediæval to the modern world. It was the race-long struggle between the Greeks and the Persians, Christianity and Judaism, realism and formalism, ideas and institutions, spring and

winter, with the attempt to breathe a larger spirit into old forms which we call growth. The various sovereigns were striving for position, to assert their independence, their responsibility alone to God and their people, while all Western Europe was in a ferment with changes and revolutions open or silent. There had been a vigorous reaction from the absolutism of Innocent III, when the strongest monarchs of Europe were compelled to bow the neck to the Roman pontiff. A succession of comparatively weak popes had coincided with the rise of the spirit of nationality in Spain, France and England. When Boniface VIII came to the throne with much the same ideas that Innocent III had held, he seemed like one born out of due time, with assumptions in regard to the papal office which seemed already decrepit with age. Indeed the old regime was rapidly passing away and a new spirit was taking possession of Western Europe before which even the popes must bow. The study of Aristotle, the mediæval pope in philosophy, had led to interest in the outer world and revealed man's union with nature. Secular things, secular knowledge, secular officers, secular theories were becoming important, moving in popular estimation up along side of sacred subjects and fostering the spirit of science, nationality and liberty.

While the popes were proclaiming absolute power over the kings of other countries, they were weak at Rome itself. Even the mighty Hildebrand

had died in exile, and grief over his disappointment broke the heart of Boniface VIII. The popes saw that to maintain their power in Italy they must have temporal sovereignty, have landed possessions large enough to make them influential among the secular princes. They claimed that the various kings of Western Europe were direct feudal dependants of the Catholic Church, and responsible for carrying out its decrees, and for submission to its authority. Earthly power was of the devil and for it to be legitimate the Church must authorize it. The so-called benefit of clergy subjected the people to license and fraud, for ecclesiastical courts would not administer strict justice, or maintain the people's demand for a kingdom of righteousness. Certainly the papal curia had not read the nineteenth Psalm, "The law of the Lord is perfect; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." The Church authorities of all grades were not content with spiritual dominion, and perhaps no body of Church officials ever were, but thirsted for wealth and temporal power. By his enormous claims, not only over the religion of man, but over the temporal affairs of nations, the pope had become the great disturbing element in the political system of Europe.

In international politics the pope favored the to him most dangerous king. The power of absolution and dispensation, given to him for the spiritual interests of the Church, was used to punish his

personal enemies or to further his worldly interests. He claimed the power to set aside all law, and was himself the supreme judge, legislator and executive. He asserted the right to tax the Churches in all countries, pressing the demands according to circumstances. He claimed England especially as a fief of the Holy See, and taxation there was the most severe and the most profitable. These burdens placed upon the English people were to support Latin prelates who had never been to England and cared nothing for its spiritual welfare. The pope sent legates to enforce the fiscal claims, and these legates in his name controlled the religious affairs of the realm, the clergy and the local Churches. Through the codification of the canon law there grew up a body of law and lawyers who were devoted to enlarging and maintaining the powers and privileges of the Church and the pope against all temporal rulers. The government of the world was centered in one person with his own system of law and his own interpretation. Unfortunately for the papacy this unique hierarchal theory broke down in the next two centuries with an almost universal revolt against ecclesiastical tyranny.

In this European contest for supremacy France first defied the pope and undermined his power. Boniface VIII was a capable man, politically aggressive, active in thought and domineering in will; but he failed in his attempt to put new wine into old bottles, to enforce twelfth century ideas of

the authority of the Holy See on the new conditions of the fourteenth century. We rather feel pity for the strenuous, mistaken old pope, as Philip IV makes his life a burden, and Dante places him head downwards in the ooze of hell. He had to contend against two strong monarchs, Philip IV and Edward I, and, as revolt against Rome was ripe and all Europe ready to resist her claims, he suffered overwhelming defeat. The pope had ignored the claims of the clergy as well as of the crown, had not only encroached on the civil government, but offended the hierarchy of the national Churches. He had exacted large sums of money as annates, as levies on the Churches and as tribute from the crown. He had set up the papal curia as a tribunal supreme over national courts or jurisdiction. If clergy, monks or friars abused their privileges and were summoned to answer by the State, Rome encouraged them to resist the civil power. The Church would not obey the law, claimed to be above the law and would some day perish without the law. Philip IV was determined to put his foot on priestly domination, to check the assumptions of papal supremacy, which were a menace to every European king and kingdom. Boniface forbade the French and English to levy any tax on the clergy. Philip replied by forbidding the export of silver and gold and precious stones, Edward I withdrew from the clergy the protection of the laws. The ecclesiastics were glad to pay the

king as the nearer tyrant and let the pope protest. Philip appealed to the States General, and clergy, nobles and people denied the pope's temporal supremacy. Boniface set forth the fatal claim of universal dominion, that all kings were his subjects, all countries his domains, but its chief effect was to ruin the claim of the papacy and to force the people to national independence.

One of the leading characteristics of the age was the legal spirit permeating the whole field of administrative authority. Frederick II the Emperor, Alphonso X of Castile, Philip IV and Louis IX of France, and Edward I of England, showed the general tendency toward the systematizing and codifying of the laws. An influential lawyer class was arising who were applying the principles of the old Roman law to the government of the State and asserting the independence of the civil authorities. These lawyers were becoming the trusted advisers of the kings, they with the nobles were becoming better statesmen and were taking the civil offices away from the clergy. The claims of the papacy to universal supremacy rested on the old Roman imperial law, but this confirmed the kings as rulers of the State. The very legal principles upon which the lawyers of the Church had founded the absolute power of the pope, now did equally effective service in establishing the position of the civil ruler. History revealed that the Roman emperors, like Constantine, Justinian or Charlemagne, were not sub-

ject to the pope or the Church, but governed the Church as part of their divine commission.

It is interesting to study the character of the popes of this period. Some of them were Puritan in spirit, harsh in temper, narrow in sympathy, confounding their personal hatred with zeal for the Church. Others were loose, corrupt, worldly, avaricious, guilty of nepotism, simony and official blasphemy. They were ambitious of power, grasping, deceitful, guilty of treachery, bloodshed, and bribery. Their manners and morals would have disgraced the nobles of that age, much more the spiritual head of Christendom. They had resigned the vain pomp and glory of the world, but, like Ulysses, though they stuffed their ears with wax, the voice of the sirens was too strong for the weakness of the flesh. They tried persistently to solve that world-long problem of how to serve God and mammon. As Mr. Froude says: "Of all Bunyan's characters the most pitiable is that of Mr. Facing Both Ways, the type of those men who sincerely believe they are cheating both God and the devil and end only in deceiving themselves." It seems strange that even the deep religious feeling of the people, and their attachment to the institutions and customs of the Church, could keep them faithful. But the miracle plays, pictures from the Bible, sermons in the vernacular, popular manuals of devotion, and, above all, the Black Death, helped to keep

alive the religious instincts of the people, and saved the papacy and the priesthood.

As if the decline in the character of the pope and the standing of the papacy were not enough, the popes moved the seat of their empire to Avignon in Southern France. The very dissevering of the papacy and the Eternal City lessened and came near ruining the power of the Holy See. Besides it was felt by all Europe that the popes were not only living on French soil, but were really under the power of the French king. The other nations naturally resented this reducing the papacy to an appanage of the French crown and ceased to regard the pope as in any sense the arbiter of Europe, or to feel that they were at all responsible for obeying him. Avignon was noted for its sensuality and pleasure, worse than the typical French court, say of Louis XV. It is at present proposed to restore the mediæval city, but the results will prove disastrous to the reputation of the Avignonese Popes. There were no great popes in this period. The Avignon holders of the office appear small in contrast with the strong men who had built up the papacy. The humiliation of the long Schism, too, distracted the allegiance of Europe, religious disorders were multiplied, and the secular spirit was spreading among all classes of people. Sensuality and worldliness were leading to their natural concomitant, religious ecstasy; prophets and visionary preachers arose, all of whom denounced the vices

of the papacy. These enthusiasts, pure in aim, but hysterical in temperament, showed that the life of the Church was deranged, and needed a sane revival and a rational leader. St. Catharine of Sienna might lead the pope back to Rome, to the Holy City and his eager people; but he would more readily canonize her for her saintliness than obey her warnings and reform his office.

During the latter part of the thirteenth and the former part of the fourteenth century national feeling grew rapidly in both France and England. In 1294 Edward I summoned the first regular and representative parliament, and at about the same time Philip IV summoned the burghers to the meeting of the States General. The civil rulers, supported by many of the clergy, were taking the position that the civil power was supreme in its own sphere and ought not to yield to the claims of the Church. Political and theological thought were evidently taking a new turn and people were getting a new view of the relation of the Church and the State. Men had been glad they were Catholic, they were now becoming glad they were Frenchmen or Englishmen, and proposed that the papal sovereignty should be confined to ecclesiastical affairs. In the early part of the nineteenth century the citizen of Venice is said to have claimed, he was first a Venetian, second a Christian, and third an Italian. Italian liberty and national independence had to wait till they could say first an Italian, and they could

determine to put the united country in its proper place. If in England or France there had been a king, wise, earnest and brave, he might have led his country to complete independence, with a national Church and immunity from papal exactions or claims to over-lordship. The improved commerce, agriculture, manufactures, living, roads, towns, the more independent men, the freer thought, afforded the means for such a transformation; but the lack of a great political leader or wise ruler compelled the people to suffer for centuries.

Besides the spirit of nationality, the rise of the cities and the Third Estate, the development of commerce, the middle class and the universities, the intellectual liberty, all were tending to weaken the grounds of the papal supremacy. The thirteenth century revival in thought, the discussions of Aquinas and Duns Scotus, the work of St. Francis and St. Dominic, leading to a revival of religion and a longing for justice on earth, meant so much more opposition to papal pretensions. During the century also when national feeling was growing so rapidly the papacy was weak, and by a series of political blunders had placed itself in direct hostility to the new spirit of loyalty to one's country. It had become a mark of patriotism to contend against the pope: for the papacy, as so frequently in history, had assumed the unfortunate position of being opposed to the national sentiment. This lays its supporters open to the charge of being traitors

to their native land, the severest accusation that can be brought against a body of men, and a calamity for both the Church and the people. Public opinion was beginning then for the first time in Western Europe to crystallize, and to become a great political and religious force. Discussions of general principles was leading to a broader view of the nature of the State and the relation of the temporal and the spiritual. Debates as to the nature and functions of the Church, discussions as to its doctrines or its administration, meant measures taken for its reform. During the period of the crusades and the awakening of Western Europe the papacy had shown itself adapted to the religious and social needs of the people; but reason and conscience had outgrown papal domination, and with the intellectual and moral and commercial advance it was no longer equal to the demands. The spirit of feudalism agreed with the papal regime, but the growth of new national life and of lay influence proved the pope's garment too small to cover the rapidly developing young manhood of the modern world. The pope ought to have made the reforms so loudly demanded, but would not. A reforming pope, then as in the first half of the nineteenth century, would have been a contradiction, well nigh an impossibility. Germany had almost ceased to contend with the papacy, France controlled it at the neighboring Avignon, so England must enter the arena as the champion of national rights.

CHAPTER IV.

THOUGHT LIFE.

It is not the reign of kings, the international wars, or the changes in empire, but the development of thought that really determines the significance of an age. Underlying the outward and visible transformation is that "stream of mighty thought" which pervades and silently transforms the great world forces. The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries introduced a fresh creative epoch, when the human mind was throwing off its trammels, and regaining its freedom to use its wings. The molting season was passed, and the new energy must find expression in wider flights. Free inquiry and intellectual activity, which had declined with the coming of the barbarians, were reappearing with the morning sun, and the abundant fruit in later times indicates the inherent energy they possessed. The study of philosophy and the awakening intelligence of Europe, stimulated and directed by the universities and the work of the Schoolmen, were leading to doubt as to the doctrines of the Roman Church and still greater opposition to its government and life. Wycliffe was educated in this thought age and atmosphere, was brought face to face with the great

truths then pressing for recognition, and opened his heart to them. Seven hundred years before Christ, it is said, a man in Greece began to think and they called him a philosopher. What the Greeks were doing before that the historian saith not, but any man in any age who, like Thales or Wycliffe, begins to think, deserves the title of philosopher.

We have failed rightly to understand the work of the Schoolmen, especially as they were connected with the universities which had been recently founded, and were taking the leading part in the progress of learning. The current idea that the Scholastics spent their time trying to determine whether God could do wrong, whether a thing could be and not be, or how many angels could dance on the point of a needle, utterly fails to appreciate the great work which they did for Western civilization. The world is slow in recognizing its dependence on men of thought, the lords of the realm of reason, and directors of the public conscience for kings, popes, bishops, priests and laity. The Schoolmen did the thinking for the world at that time, formulated rational views of doctrine, and maintained that the tenets of the Church should not contradict reason and conscience, and enslave them both. Receiving their inspiration largely from the Moors of Spain, as they from Plato and Aristotle, they carried on their speculations in a purposeful spirit, and led the way for permanent advance in thought and practical life. To force the old out of

its time-honored seat there must be new motives and new ideas presented, and these must come from the men of thought. No doubt the learning was proud of itself, became narrow from self-adulation, and at times persecuted for opinion's sake. They were not all willing to think and let think, willing to let thinkers alone for fear they would be fighting against God. In condemning religious adversaries, they like their modern confreres were not as wise or as modest as the Archangel Michael, who durst not bring a railing accusation against the devil, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee."

Without discussing in what respects Wycliffe was more than a Scholastic, we ought to emphasize that he was a Scholastic, and one of the greatest and clearest-minded of the brotherhood. There had been several other distinguished English Schoolmen, Duns Scotus, the Subtle Doctor, the champion of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, William of Ockham, the Invincible Doctor, who supported the civil power against the papacy, and Bradwardine, probably one of Wycliffe's personal teachers; not forgetting Roger Bacon, the greatest name in English science, from all whom our subject, the last and greatest of the Schoolmen, got both inspiration and direction. His own religious nature was rational, practical, vigorous and healthy. Like the Jewish prophets he saw facts and tendencies clearly, and did not allow his mind to be blinded with the mirage of worldliness. He was the most

open-minded student and teacher at Oxford, and to such natures the revelations of God's truth and purpose come. Bunsen says a severe trial awaits any one who looks primitive Christianity in the face, but Wycliffe was able to gaze long and earnestly, and to reform his views and life in harmony with its teachings. If we allow it to flow freely over the pebbles truth will work itself clear.

The English Schoolmen were distinguished for their subtlety of thought, for the wide and practical range of their ideas. More free and bolder than the writers of the Continent they reflected upon and criticised the position and the deeds of the Church, and laid down the laws of righteous government to be applied to all rulers, secular and ecclesiastic. Roger Bacon's pursuit of science, although it was supposed to bring him into dangerous relations to the devil, yet aided the advancement of learning, the doing away with superstitions and placing emphasis on the universal reign of law. Science has slain more hobgoblins, ghosts and popular monsters, than all the knights or Paladins that ever existed. Men began to look at practical affairs more from a scientific and philosophical standpoint, and the development of law in the political world was strengthened by the revelation of the reign of law in the realm of nature. The world ceased to be looked upon as evil and took its proper place beside the Bible as a great teacher of God and truth.

Abundant sources of Wycliffe's thought posi-

tion are readily discovered. Grosseteste, the learned and pious Bishop of Lincoln, whom Wycliffe called "Saint Robert, the great head and heart of the Church," had in the century preceding united the love of learning with the free spirit of action and clerical independence. While adhering to the papal authority, he was no Jesuit or place seeker, but boldly and specifically denounced the papacy for its avarice and usurpations. With him Christian morals were the necessary fruit of Christian faith, the privileges of the clergy implied weightier responsibility, and authority justly belonged only to holy, unworldly priests. He forbade his clergy to accept any secular office, refused to bestow benefices on pluralists, boys, or those holding worldly positions, even the pope himself. He venerated the Church his mother so sincerely that for her sake he condemned his father the pope, asserting that the abuse of his power would send the successor of St. Peter to hell fire. On the side of political liberty, too, he was the close friend of Simon de Montfort, a clear and independent thinker, who was not overborne by the weight of authority but appealed to observation, experience and common sense. He protested against the increasing papal demands for money, putting aliens into English cures, manfully resisting and condemning the pope for his attacks on the rights of the English Church. We should remember him, too, as the founder of the Chest of St. Frideswyde, the first provision to

help poor students at Oxford, probably by making loans to them on low terms compared to the exorbitant rates of the Jews. Grosseteste, to be sure, was never put into the saints' calendar by the pope; but he was canonized by the veneration of his countrymen, sharing with Thomas à Becket a peculiar shrine in the hearts of the English people. At his death celestial music filled the air, distant church bells tolled, rung by invisible hands, and miracles were wrought at his tomb and at his cathedral church. He even appeared in a vision to the haughty, avaricious Innocent IV, it is said, and blasted his health if not his soul for wanting to desecrate his bones. With such a godly bishop and saint as a popular model and leader Wycliffe could tread with a firm step in the reformer's path.

William of Ockham, one of Oxford's most distinguished Schoolmen, was also Wycliffe's teacher in the realm of political speculation. He claimed that the Bible should be supreme over all infallible interpreters, appealed to experience as a test of truth, and overthrew the credulous philosophy which held as facts opinions based on the authority of the popes and the councils of the Church. Many a man might be satisfied with an infallible revelation, transmitted by an infallible Church, and interpreted by an infallible head; but reason and conscience were awake in others, and they must turn questions over until daylight shone through them. To such men truth was not a plane surface but a

rough crystal with a hundred faces, each reflecting a different image. Ockham enlarged the dominion of the State in its own domain, Wycliffe extended its rights and duties over the Church, whenever the big stick became necessary. Ockham claimed that the pope and the whole body of the clergy belonged to a ministry, not of lordship but of service, their only dominion being an evangelical rule, a service of love in imitation of Christ. Wycliffe also contended for a spiritual Church whose treasure was in heaven, whose prelates should not be lords but servants of God and men, meek saviors of souls, followers of the lowly Nazarene. The atmosphere of Oxford, rarely without a spirit of inquiry, investigation or speculation, stimulated his natural tendencies to bring all things before the bar of reason and conscience, and to decide according to the dictates of practical common sense.

Wycliffe's chief teacher, however, as to the functions of the State was Marsiglio of Padua, the keenest-sighted of the antagonists of papal assumptions. He had definitely claimed as early as 1324 that the sovereignty of the State rested with the people, and that the fountain of justice sprang from them, that the people were the real rulers, and the kings and other officials their responsible executives and representatives. It was easy to carry this over to the Church and to maintain that the people were the Church, and had charge of it; that the clergy were to be their servants, not their masters, and

from Christ's example were not to hold property, to have temporal power or to govern estates or men. The true Church belongs not to the official body but to the whole number of Christian believers. There could be no absolute ruler anywhere, either in Church or State. Pope, emperor, king, bishop and priest, were all servants of their master the people. The Church is superior to any of its officers, and men must be excommunicated not by the clergy but by the whole body of the faithful. The pope, too, could not absolve the emperor's subjects from obeying the laws of God or free them from their oath of allegiance to their sovereign.

Marsiglio, and the Ghibelline political philosophers, insisted that people had no right to apply the term spiritual to the worldly acts of the clergy, such as holding lands and wealth, fighting and living in luxury. In their ordinary relations to society they must be given no peculiar privileges. There was to be no coercion in the Church, for the Gospel means persuasion, not coercive force. The errors of opinion lie beyond human judicature, and of these Jesus Christ is the only judge, a principle which is the very basis of religious toleration. The supremacy of the Bishop of Rome did not come from Peter, but from connection with the Roman Empire. The supreme power of the Church lay in a general council of the laity and clergy, said council to be summoned by the emperor and not to be controlled by the pope. The pope had no right of

supreme judge even over the clergy, but they had a right to be tried by their peers. The sole privilege of the clergy is their spiritual character; the only final authority is the Word of God, and each man should have the right to interpret it for himself. To sum it all up, a searching investigation into the claims of the papacy, using the Bible as a standard, would overset all the pretensions of the papal hierarchy. Marsiglio seems the most enlightened and to us Americans the most admirable in his political views of all the mediæval scholars.

Gregory XI with a true instinct saw that Wycliffe in his teaching was the successor of Marsiglio, and was putting into practical application the "damnable doctrines" which the Italian had thought out while at the court of the Emperor of Germany. If any sincere man in those days took the trouble to think upon the papal pretensions, he must deny their validity or historical foundation. The idea of universal dominion and of papal supremacy had arisen from the organization of the Roman Empire. The Augustinian theology, with the emphasis placed upon God as sovereign of the universe, had strengthened the papal pretensions as Christ's vicegerent. Aquinas had established the sovereignty of the papacy, the sacrificial character of the mass, purgatory, works of supererogation, indulgences, and the whole Roman sacramental system. The common people of Europe, like the Athenians in Paul's time, were very religious, and the clergy

played upon their faith and their fears by gorgeous ceremonies and childish superstitions. The architecture of the period, grand and ennobling, might have aided in elevating the people, had not the paintings in the churches, the relics and the pilprimages, so strongly emphasized the current beliefs, and made the laity the puppets of the clergy. In stern opposition to these clerical hood-winkings of the poor, Bradwardine a devout and able theologian, the extoller and champion of the grace of God, taught the doctrine of free grace, that God demanded not ceremonies but the fruits of righteousness. By a careful searching of the Scriptures, Wycliffe confirmed these teachings of his highly revered master and built his own system of thought upon them. In response the clergy appealed to tradition, to the authority of the Church fathers, but a deeper study turned these weapons against the claims of the hierarchy. In the minds of thoughtful men God was becoming larger, as He has ever been since, and men-made institutions smaller, and a new alignment of spiritual forces must come. The theologians taught that the sun represented God, the moon the Church, and the stars the clergy. Carrying on the figure the people may be represented by the nebulæ, the star dust of the heavens; but the future, like the powerful telescope, has resolved the nebulæ into vast universes of tremendous force.

From his study of Marsiglio's writings and from

the independence of thought in the universities, Wycliffe became the advocate of more popular liberty, and of the worth of the individual man in the Church. His chief contribution to the general Reformation of Europe is the right of the individual to form his own opinions on the basis of Scriptures and reason. "But the statement of this principle overthrew the power of the mightiest organization in the world." The essence of the new thought was the comparative unimportance of tradition in Church and State, and the right of the members of the body politic or religious to govern themselves as they saw fit. The pope, Wycliffe maintained, was rightly subject to a council, the prelates were to be judged by their people as to their standing and fidelity, and no person could be excommunicated by a priest or higher Churchman, but only by the communion of the faithful. He had a pretty clear idea of the Democratic spirit, the people having a priest or king for convenience of government, and not by divine right of the ruler. St. Peter could not transmit authority down through the ages, especially through a line of wicked popes, and the clergy showed plainly enough that they were not doing the divine will, for they did not live the life of Christ or follow in His footsteps. It seemed to investigators like Wycliffe that the character of the Church had changed radically at the end of the first millennium, and that the second millennium was marked by far more papal presump-

tion, less of individual Church freedom or responsibility, an exaltation of the mass and priesthood, and a corresponding deterioration of preaching or active Christian work. The popes blindly took no thought for the increasing intellectual activity of the age, but greatly helped their opponents by the scandalous character of their lives. Had they been wise enough to have set their house in order and ruled as men of God, or even a seeming of the Christian spirit, the Church might have been kept united in thought and spirit for many ages more.

The atmosphere of Oxford was essentially different from that of Paris or other university centers on the Continent. Freedom both of control and of intellect had been vigorously maintained and the practical bearing of theological views and Church assumptions was constantly being judged. The worth of the individual man that distinguished their Germanic forefathers compelled them to assert their own moral convictions and to resist either king or pope, who interfered with their privileges or discussions. The peculiarities of the English nature are a constant stimulus toward reform, and furnish an advantageous ground for the development of religious and political thought. The rational, logical view of Abelard or Aristotle is united among them with the more mystic view of Plato or Bernard, and by the interplay of the practical and ideal truth is advanced.

Oxford University at this time was an ideal

place for the development of Wycliffe's peculiar thoughts. The being brought into close contact with the latest phases of speculation and investigation, the careful statement of his own arguments, the watching the subtle distinctions and fallacies of his opponents, the acceptance of points finally proven; these were meat and drink for the ardent dialectician. His logical faculty became as bright and keen as Saladin's sword, he could see right through a specious argument to the foundation of sand, and test the spirit and the truth of all thoughts or speculations. At the same time his own quickened rational powers demanded the construction of a system of thought both political and theological that would commend itself to his own judgment, that was built not on tradition and authority, but on experience, common sense, righteousness, and humanity. The very training given to make him a defender of the Church revealed to him the unsoundness, the unchristian character of its theories and life, and compelled him to attack and denounce the mother Church that had nurtured him. He had the courage to face his convictions, to go into the temple of truth as a humble worshiper, when the revelations there made were against what he had before regarded as sacred. It is the most trying conflict in a man's life when custom and authority and obligation, and almost conscience, is on one side and reason stands alone on the other, like David against Goliath. To take

the torch of truth and go out with it into the lone world, turning one's back upon early associations and friends, in the firm belief that that torch will yet enlighten the world and all men will hasten to its brightness, requires the sublimest faith of which martyr and saint are made.

CHAPTER V.

POLITICAL ENGLAND.

The political condition of England during the active life of Wycliffe was itself an historical development. With the conquest under William I came the Norman despotism of the crown and the Latin despotism of the Church, each supplementing the other to the detriment of local self-government or individual liberty. In opposition to this two-fold absolutism were the restlessness of the barons over the loss of their feudal rights, the growing feeling of importance among the knights of the shire, and the growth of the towns with their wealth, their influential burgesses and their increasing number of charters. These various classes lined up differently to be sure in the successive struggles, but the main fact as far as Anglo-Saxon liberty is concerned, is that they united in any way. The interests of the king and the larger barons were usually opposed, the knights and the burghers preferred one tyrant to forty, the Church hierarchy generally, though appointed by the king, had sprung from the people, and gave their powerful support now to this side, now to that. The political pot was for centuries a great seething mass,

but out of it came the principles of constitutional government and popular liberty.

The English people welded together under the stern hand of William I, taught law by Henry I and Henry II, trained in national resistance under John, in constitutional government and the value of the Commons under Edward I, have come out of much tribulation to be a great and united nation. The wars of Edward III, the greatly quickened national spirit, the rise of the House of Commons, the newly awakened religious sentiment, the development of the English language and literature, all these forces combined to make a great epoch in English history. The union of the sturdy Anglo-Saxon with his kinsman the Dane and the Norman, given insight and direction by the intellectual life of the Church, had made a progressive people in politics and religion. On "this tight little island, girt round by the sea," the people never had loved papal influence, and their opposition to papal dominion was almost chronic. A tremendous moral force, the outgrowth of centuries of Anglo-Saxon devotion to justice, excited them to wrath against the corruption and fiscal exactions of the papacy. The courageous English spirit allied itself with the profoundest religious feeling to protest against the rapacity and usurpation of a foreign potentate with his horde of greedy cardinals. By a happy union of climate, of sea influence, of insular position, of race supplementing race, the English people became

thus early, as later their descendants in America, the pioneers in the wilderness, to raise the altars of individual freedom and government by law.

Many other things also tended to strengthen the position of the kings of England, as independent rulers within their own domains. The nation had made remarkable progress in liberty and civilization, the growth of commerce and the development of industries had raised up the strong middle class, who felt the importance and independence which wealth usually brings. Then the growth of the cities with their numerous charters and their increasing independence of the barons, was raising up an influential class of free citizens, devoted to national union and advancement. With their larger outlook they were rivaling the nobles in luxury of living and the clergy in knowledge, and from their furnishing ready money for the needs of the nation they were demanding a larger part in the practical administration of affairs. There were abundant tokens of a rapidly developing and vigorous national life, manifesting itself in foreign wars, growth of political institutions, architecture, and literature, and particularly in strenuous protests against papal taxation.

Edward III in the early part of his reign reached the English ideal of a sovereign. His victories at Crecy and Calais, supplemented by the still more brilliant victory of the Black Prince at Poictiers, made him the center of his country's

glory. The peace of Bretigny in 1360 had marked the climax of his greatness, for the French had accepted the results of his conquests, and admitted his claim to a large part of their territory. But Charles V, King of France, was a wise prince, deserving the title of Augustus, and he determined to deal with Edward III, as Philip II had dealt with Richard Coeur de Lion. The wily Ulysses was again more than a match for the headstrong Achilles, and Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, was mightier than the god of war, be it Mars or Bellona. Charles V determined to fight the English as the Russians fought Napoleon, or Fabius Hannibal, by keeping out of their reach, resolutely refusing to be drawn into a set battle, but hanging upon their flanks and cutting off stragglers and provisions. He had also found a warrior fully equal to the Black Prince in the science of war, but who was in the prime of life, while the Black Prince was already stricken with the disease which ended in his death. When the Black Prince's brother, John of Gaunt, set out to march through France, Bertrand de Guesclin, by the king's order, kept moving before and around him cutting off his supplies, until starved, ragged and cold, the English troops perished on the mountains of Auvergne. Only a pitiful remnant of this well-equipped and expensive army reached the Garonne, their path from Calais to Bordeaux being strewn with their dead and dying

comrades. This expedition ended that English occupation of France, and made the French people feel again the promptings toward nationality and the possibility of national resistance.

A war of conquest brings the penalty in its train, and the cup of glory has its own bitter dregs. The time for the building of the British Empire had not yet come, and Mr. Chamberlain's ambition to paint a large part of the world British red could not be realized. The French spirit of nationality, rapidly growing and solidifying, was strongly against the English possessions and claims on their side of the channel. Henry of Castile in return for the aid of the Black Prince to Pedro the Cruel, had by a skillful naval battle won from Edward III the mastery of the seas, and the coasts of England were being ravaged by the hostile fleet. Every ship of a then well equipped fleet had been taken or destroyed by the Spaniards at Rochelle, and the English masters of the seas learned how bitter defeat was to a proud people. As the darkest hour is just before the dawn, so the brightest hour often seems to be just before sunset. From glory to despair the stairway is easy and intense national humiliation followed very quickly after Edward III's brilliant victories. England seemed to have reached the lowest ebb of fortune, her conquests were lost, her shores insulted, her commerce swept from the seas, and the land was drained by taxation and bloodshed. When the

commons were asked in 1354 if they would consent to a perpetual peace, they all cried "Yes;" so far had English courage sunken under repeated disasters and military and financial mismanagement.

Edward III, like Henry II, though not so great a man, had his last years full of trouble, all the harder to bear that the former part of his reign had been so full of triumph. The One Hundred Years' War, in spite of Crecy and Calais and Poictiers, was a blunder on the part of the English rulers and a calamity to their people. Cæsar wrote: "To those whom they wish to destroy the Gods grant a longer time of impunity that the reverse may be the harder to bear." Edward III's mental and physical powers had been preternaturally developed and then largely because of his luxury and profligacy, prematurely declined, leaving him an old man before his time. His character was false, its duplicity disclosing itself in disaster and suffering, where the dross is separated from the gold. The king who had won such victories was, by the defeat of the armies abroad and the suffering of the people at home, revealed as not only decrepit in body, but small in soul, weak in will, by nature mean, selfish and narrow, the prey of politicians and parasites, the tool of his ministers and mistresses. England was thoroughly exhausted before the death of Edward III. The terrible effects of the One Hundred Years' War were ap-

parent in all directions, mismanagement and excessive taxation, misery and extravagance, court intrigue and national defeat. War may have been fine sport for the nobles of that day, but it spelt ruin for their country, and poverty, distress and starvation for their helpless people.

One of the most pitiable sights under heaven is when a strong man loses his early ideals and motives, when the sun which shone brightly until past his midday goes behind the clouds, and he dies as the beasts die. Edward III was at first England's pride and delight, who aroused the national enthusiasm and made heroes of the whole race. But the personality which had shone so brightly in a period of triumph, revealed its weakness and meanness, when by repeated misfortunes his people were called upon, not to be heroes but sufferers. He tricked his parliaments, oppressed his people by heavy taxation and purveyance for the royal needs, sold monopolies like Queen Elizabeth, taxed trade to the injury of the trading class who must furnish him money, and then swindled his creditors. The personal qualities of Edward III—love of pomp, rashness, licentiousness, cruelty, self-will, vanity—afford little claim to honor. He knew the importance of keeping on good terms with his people, and made concessions to them frequently; but he was arbitrary, violated the laws at his royal pleasure, and repudiated his promises not to assess arbitrary taxation. He had not the sagacity of

Edward I, was not a constructive builder, and all the English nation owes to him is the record of his early victories, and the advance in constitutional government wrested from him because of his need for money.

In the latter part of his reign Alice Perrers, a married woman of great wealth and beauty, controlled Edward III, and by her help the Duke of Lancaster was the government. In ancient times Venus and Mars were caught in the same net, and this wily adventuress had become the royal mistress and was helping ruin both king and kingdom. This in some respects remarkable woman, was especially the object of public jealousy and hatred. The king had given her the jewels of the late queen, the Good Queen Philippa, the patron saint of her people. He had also permitted her to ride through the city of London on a white horse, attired as the Lady of the Sun. She was charged with interfering in the administration of justice, of sitting on the bench with the justices, and condemning or defending accused persons so as to get money for herself. Edward III died in the fifty-first year of his reign. The death-bed of this magnificent prince honored as the defendant of his country's prestige and envied as the favorite of fortune, recalls Solon's advice to Croesus. Alice Perrers took the jeweled rings from his finger, the attendants rushed through the palace to gather plunder, and he was left to die alone, when a faith-

ful priest entered the room unbidden. The dying monarch took the cross which he brought, held it up before his eyes, kissed it and expired. It is marvelous how the shadow of that cross gives comfort and hope of forgiveness to generation after generation of the erring sons of men.

In many respects Edward III was a typical Englishman, like Richard I or Henry V, but he had too low ambitions, too much love of finery inherited with his French blood. The popular idea of chivalry culminated in him, but it was not the type of King Arthur, much less of Sir Galahad. His court had been the most splendid in Europe, his armies had marched over France, his fleet ridden triumphant in the channel, the royal revenues had doubled and the condition of the poor was greatly improved. But the death of this valiant yet reprehensible monarch emphasized, not his brilliant victories or the material prosperity of his country, but the silent upgrowth of liberty, the increasing power of parliament, the development of constitutional rights, the beginning of social and religious revolution, the growth of national feeling and of the English language and literature. As a critic says: "The real glory of Edward III's reign does not lie in his gigantic military expeditions and triumphs, but in the calamities and disasters, in the Black Death that emancipated the English serf, the loss of Acquitaine that made England an insular and independent nation, and taught him and

his nobles that if the nation was to put forth its full strength in time of need, its rulers must take account of the wrongs of the many as well as of the rights of the few. The irony of human events is shown in the fact that only the dazzling glory remains as the fruits of Edward's victories, while the concessions wrung from royal prerogative and feudal tyranny are felt to this day, and remain as real, fruitful and inalienable accessions to the ever widening empire of human freedom. The spell of Crecy and Poictiers casts a glamour over the age, but it was an age of transition, development, emancipation, characterized by a silent and gradual contraction of the area of privilege, and an enlargement of the area of liberty."

Charles V of France was a wise ruler, who through much suffering on the part of his people, rescued France from the power of the English and restored his country to national independence. He was more than a match for the chivalrous Black Prince, or the English armies and navies. It was the wisdom and cunning of the fox matched against the rashness and blindness of the lynx, and the lynx got caught in the trap. War lost its glamour for the English when waged against such a monarch, and such military tactics, when no victories were gained, and only the burdens of excessive taxation were felt from the conflict. France was at this time a much better governed State than England, the frugality of the French monarch con-

trasting strikingly with the extravagance and wasteful prodigality of Edward's court. Unfortunately he was able to establish through his success an administrative and fiscal despotism of which in all their changes in government the French people have never been free. On the other hand, the failure of England abroad aided the advance of parliamentary government at home; the period was fruitful of wholesome legislation and the steady growth of constitutional principles. The king of England had been styled "The King of the Sea," but now, as when van Tromp swept the Channel with a broom at his mast head, the haughty nation had been defeated and cowed. The English people may have been ashamed of the desolation they had wrought in France and fearful of divine retribution, but they were more bitterly stung by the insults of their enemies, and the lowness of national honor.

Edward, the Black Prince, is one of the most interesting characters in English history. Unfortunately his early fame and work for the English people is sullied by his unwise choice of allies, and by his terrible barbarity. He had shocked Europe by espousing the cause of Pedro the Cruel, marching into Spain to re-enthrone that tyrant and to his country's humiliation and disgrace winning the enmity of the really efficient military leader Henry of Trastamara. He returned from his unwise and foolish expedition stricken with the fatal

disease which had carried off four-fifths of his men. At the surrender of Limoges he had men, women and children slaughtered like beasts at the shambles, three thousand innocent town's-people being killed—a murder as vile as that of Theodosius at Thessalonica or of Herod the Great at Bethlehem. With less of hypocrisy than Charles V, the German Emperor, when he professed to the pope his exceeding sorrow that the German mercenaries had pillaged Rome and taken his eminence prisoner, though for reasons of state he did not at once release him; the Black Prince, when he had taken King John prisoner at Poictiers, as a feudal dependant knelt before his captive suzerain, and waited upon his royal needs. It is a pity that the man who could be so chivalrous with a monarch or a band of knights, should order an indiscriminate slaughter of helpless town's-people, who appealed to him for mercy. When the Black Prince had become a butcher, the affairs of England must have been desperate. It showed the terrible savagery of the English nature when once freed from the restraining leash. This same Black Prince, the mirror and type of feudal chivalry, took the part of the people in their struggle for constitutional government and parliamentary efficiency. This is his noblest title to fame, not his brilliant victories, but his being the leader of the first great popular movement for reform within the walls of parliament. We regret that he could not have lived and joined

with Wycliffe in the great work of establishing religious and political liberty for the English people.

John of Gaunt in the latter part of Edward III's reign was the oldest surviving son, the only duke in England and after the death of the Black Prince, the most powerful subject in the realm. As the chief noble and possible heir to the throne he wanted to take the lead in public affairs, but lacked both virtue and discretion. He was not satisfied with his elevated position but wanted military glory, to drive the clergy from public office and to confiscate some of their enormous wealth. He had little military or political capacity, obtained money to build a fleet to defend England, but his fleet was destroyed and the money wasted. The intolerable burden of taxation led parliament to inquire into the expeditions and the reasons for the national disasters. The fact is, the people had to pay the enormous costs of Gaunt's unsuccessful work, and turned with bitterness against the man who had brought them not only national disgrace, but intolerable financial burdens. Men when irritated by public loss and humiliation seek some black sheep or scape goat upon whom to heap their sins and their wrath, and the unpopular duke exactly fitted the need.

By a fortunate accumulation of titles and estates the haughty duke had gotten immense wealth and influence, claimed on behalf of his wife,

the oldest daughter of Pedro the Cruel, to be king of Castile, and wanted his country, greatly to its injury, to aid him in obtaining the throne. He was the keystone of the whole administration in England, and of its public corruption as well, having control of the privy council, and being in modern phrase the political boss. The nobles were growing less because of the frequent wars, rich inheritances were coming to the royal family by marriages, the barons were quarreling with the Church, so that opposition to the king was becoming weak. The rise in the labor market incident to the less supply of laborers from the wars and the Black Death, and the repeated subsidies demanded by the king were impoverishing the landed class. They were casting greedy eyes on the possessions of the Church, as Henry VIII and his courtiers did two centuries later. The Duke of Lancaster's sympathies were not with the rising power of the Commons, but with the narrow class feeling of the barons, for he did not see like the Napoleons, the Greater and the Less, the tyrant's opportunity to unite with the people and make himself ruler of all. He had neither the ability nor the popular influence to be a great popular leader, like Simon de Montfort or Oliver Cromwell. The people would not trust him even when appearing friendly. He had no patriotic motive, yet put himself at the head of the reaction against the Church despotism, and confused its interests with his personal ambi-

tions. Since a cause loses more from its friends than from its enemies, this royal adventurer greatly injured the movement for reform.

John of Gaunt met Wycliffe at the Conference of Bruges, and soon discovered the similarity of their aims, if not of their spirit. He wanted to use the Oxford Don against his doughty ecclesiastical rival, William of Wykeham and other clerical officials. Politics makes strange bed fellows, and Wycliffe being in political sympathy with the duke, joined with him in opposition to the claims of the ecclesiastics and for the reformation of the Church. These two leaders made a strange team, the greedy and unscrupulous baron with his intensely selfish interests, and the pure-souled, noble-minded doctor of theology, unselfish, patriotic, devoted to his country's welfare and the salvation of its people. They both thought that the impoverishment of the clergy was necessary for the nation's good, but their reasons were as diverse as the dispositions that prompted them. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," was taken it is said from the Egyptian custom of making a team of a camel and a buffalo cow. Such a pair would be no more incongruous than this mediæval hero and saint pulling together with the narrow-minded, self-seeking feudal aristocrat. For the sake of tradition and historical criticism we must mix the paint thick when blackening John of Gaunt's reputation, but we wonder how much of

the lamp black added comes from the ground and reground cinders of clerical hatred. We remember that later when it was proposed to take away from the people the English Bible he vigorously defended in parliament the right of Englishmen to have the Holy Scriptures in their own tongue. He seemed to the laboring class, when they had come to somewhat calmer judgment, the one who of all the large landholders of England treated his tenants with the greatest fairness and justice. Supposed to be plotting to get rid of his nephew, the heir to the throne, as John had done with Arthur, or Richard III would do with the young princes in the tower, he became the chief supporter of the young king, almost the only one to be relied on in the latter part of Richard II's reign; and when he died the treacherous sovereign soon paid the penalty of his crimes by command of the duke's son whom he had so grievously wronged. In spite of his failures and greed for wealth and power, in spite of his desertion of Wyckliffe and refusal to break with Rome in a matter of doctrine, we will place a sprig of laurel over John of Gaunt's grave.

CHAPTER VI.

PARLIAMENT.

The development of the English parliament and the establishing of its powers is perhaps the most important fact in the growth of constitutional government. Simon de Montfort had summoned the burghers to parliament to get their help and their money against Henry III, and Edward I had made it a national precedent by following the wise example, and linking the people with the throne. The knights of the shire and the burghers of the towns united to form the House of Commons, representing both the lesser nobility and the power of the middle class, a union that determined the whole character of English political history. The king needed his faithful commons in his contest with the nobility and the Church, and they in turn asserted their right to share in the deliberations of parliament, to a voice in the government or administration, and to defend the liberties of the people. There was such misgovernment by the barons that they were forced to act, to overcome their reluctance to meddle with affairs of State, and to withstand the king and his council on taxation, subsidies and purveyance. The Hundred Years' War

required frequent sessions of parliament, made it necessary for them to watch the expenditures, and like Pym and Hampden to hold the king to "paths prescribed by the laws." They established the principle that no legislation was binding unless it was concurred in by both houses, that the king or royal officers could not raise money, or change or set aside the laws without their consent. The commons demanded annual parliaments, that the ministers should be responsible to parliament and might be impeached, that the king should desist from illegal taxation and from misappropriation of the revenue. The English nation, now in its young manhood, began to feel its strength and parliament dared to use its lawful power of opposing the government, or the king and his council. Not only the country gentry and the trading classes represented in the House of Commons, but the great peasant class was no longer patient under the increasing burden. The battle of Crecy, like the battles in the early history of Rome, had taught the common soldier his value in the State, and the stout English yeoman, who had won the day for England, could no longer be disregarded as a factor in the government.

Wycliffe's relation to the parliament for many years, as adviser, defender and protector, forms one of the most instructive chapters in English history. In 1365 Pope Urban V revived the claim of the Holy See against the realm of England for feudal

tribute. He demanded the one thousand marks which King John had promised to pay annually in token of submission to the Papal See as Suzerain of England. The tribute had not been paid for thirty years, and now amounted to thirty-three thousand marks, variously estimated at from $330,000 to over $1,000,000, considering the value of money at that time. The revival of this claim was an offense to the king, and stirred the temper of the English people, when national feeling was running high over the successes of the French war. The exaction of the tribute reminded the English people of the shame and ignominy of the reign of John, and they violently rejected the token of submission and subservience to the Holy See. Innocent III had appointed Stephen Langton Archbishop of Canterbury, and as John resisted he placed the kingdom under an interdict, excommunicated the king and offered the crown to Philip Augustus. John was compelled to yield, resigned his kingdom to God, St. Peter, St. Paul, Innocent III and his successors, became a feudatory of the Holy See, and bound himself to pay a tithe of one thousand marks a year. In token of his submission John laid his crown at the feet of the papal legate, Pandulph, who kicked it from him as a sign of contempt, when John was permitted to pick it up and place it on his head. The barons were indignant at this insult and the king's pusillanimity, and Runnymede and the Great Charter followed.

The tribute was odious, grudgingly and irregularly paid, and the revival of the claim proved the climax to the long contest between the papacy and the realm of England.

When Wycliffe left the cloistered halls of Oxford to take part in the world's great work the relation of the Church to the State in England had reached an acute stage. When Innocent III had compelled John to submit absolutely to the papacy, to yield up his two kingdoms and to receive them again as a gift from the Holy See, it had seemed as if the papal domination of England was complete, and would be everlasting. But weaker popes and stronger kings came on the scene, and the two forces must again decide which should have the supremacy. It was not a question as to the pope's spiritual authority, but whether he as feudal sovereign, had absolute power over England, and the English king and people were bound to carry out his decrees. Ever since the coming of Augustine, the monk, there had been a continual attempt to establish the Latin organization and spirit in Church and State in England. Foreign ecclesiastical domination and local national liberty did not settle their strife for supremacy once for all at the Council of Whitby. If permitted absolutism will grow until it controls the thought and will and conscience of men. As Tacitus says of the Romans, they would not be content until liberty was driven from sight, so ecclesiastical despots are not content as long as

one part of Man-soul is free. But the Anglo-Saxon race offered continual and effective resistance, and through men like Wycliffe maintained their right to self-government and self-development.

As soon as the national will could be expressed through a regularly organized House of Commons, the English people gave voice to their indignation against the pretensions of the papacy. The pope had reduced England to the position of a papal fief under John, had striven with Edward I for supremacy over the realm, and now under Edward III was to have a conflict with the parliament. For the king summoned parliament in 1366, not so much to consider the payment of the tribute, as to furnish him with good reasons for refusing it. Wycliffe probably attended this parliament, as a clerk or as a representative of some cathedral chapter. The first forty years of his life had been a long season of preparation of which we have few records. For the next twelve years he gave himself largely to the practical service of his country, and then six years to the spiritual uplift of the English people or we may rightly say of humanity. He advised against paying the tribute. When some monk, a doctor zealous for the pope challenged him for his opinions, he gave the arguments of seven lords against the measure. The first lord used the lion's argument of force, or when they were weak they had been compelled to pay, now being strong they had a right to resist. The second lord claimed

that the pope as a follower of Christ was disqualified from taking money, because Christ put away all worldly wealth. The third lord maintained that the pope had done no service, and, therefore, should have no pay. The fourth lord argued that the pope held all Church possessions as vassal of the king. He had paid no homage and so had lost his rights. The fifth lord denied that King John had any right to promise tribute. The sixth lord asserted that homage is due to Christ, not to the pope, and that dominion belongs to the English people. The seventh lord took the constitutional ground that John's promise was void, not having been sanctioned by parliament. These various arguments, so nicely divided by Wycliffe, at least show the many lines of opposition to the pope's demands.

The amount of money drawn from England was as enormous as the luxury at Avignon in which it was spent. During Henry III's reign the Italian cardinals drew sixty thousand marks a year from England, at least $2,000,000, at present value of money. The people hated intensely the foreigners who thus preyed upon their country. England was at this time the great harvest field for papal impositions, a never-failing treasury, rich enough to pluck, too far away to be cared for. The provisions, reservations, multiplied privileges, exactions, and appeals to the papal courts had become national grievances. By centuries of extortion and corruption the English Church had been alienated

from the papacy, poets, city and rural, and even the ballad singers sang of the venality of the papal court, a scandal in a scandalous age, and of the wrongs of the English crown and people. To the pope's demand for tribute parliament replied in vigorous English, "Forasmuch as neither King John, nor any other king, could bring this realm and kingdom in such thralldom and subjection, but by common consent of parliament, the which was not done, therefore that which he did was against his oath at his coronation. If therefore the pope should attempt anything against the king by process or other matter in deed, the king with all his subjects should, with all their force and power, resist the same." In a tract full of vigor and common sense Wycliffe supported this judgment of parliament, and the force of the reasoning appealed to the people, who were beginning to see in him a typical Englishman.

In the long conflict of authority dating from the Norman Conquest to the final separation from Rome, the side of the pope was noted for aggression, that of the king and people for resistance. Since the pope and his court had moved to Avignon it was plain that the tribute would be used for the advantage of the enemies of England, and patriotism forbade the English people to pay it. To wring the hard-earned money from the English people, to have it spent in luxuries of the papal court, or worse yet, in supplying the armies against which

England was fighting, was too much for English patriotism to bear. The exactions of the papacy were by no means voluntary contributions, and were relentlessly pressed in spite of the immense cost of the war and the heavy civic taxation, the ravages of the pestilence and the social and economic crisis. The demands for money were so persistent, the interference in ecclesiastical affairs so imperious, the sufferings of the people so acute, that they began to discuss the nature and function of the Church, and to question the whole foundation of the papal system. The days of Hildebrand and Innocent III had passed away, and the waiting for three days of Henry IV barefooted in the snow at Canossa, or the submission of Frederick Barbarossa at St. Mark's, Venice, could not be repeated in the fourteenth century. The English people, too, were different from those of the Continent, for they had acquired settled habits of resistance in the affairs of the kingdom. The papal rule over England was greatly imperiled, and the new popes, for fear of losing their control, yielded the point, and the claim of papal lordship over England was never again made.

The Italian cardinals at the papal court lived in luxury from the proceeds of English benefices, which they had never seen and would never care to see. Brokers at Avignon sold the livings to speculators or criminals, whose only object was to rob the parish and in no way to provide for re-

pairs or services. This spoliation reminds us of the large sums the English people sent early in the nineteenth century to Constantinople as loans to be spent in the revels of the Turks, but which afterwards demanded warships to collect. As if these things were not enough to stir up the people, the papal legate or financial agent conducted himself oppressively and didactically in England, showing his lack of regard for the people and his disgust at their customs. He lived in London in great style, his house from the amount of business done resembling the custom house of some kingdom. Even yet the Forestieri are to be plucked in Italy. What are the English riches for if not for the Italians, or why should not the true sons of the Church live off the foster children, or having given the Gospel to England, why should they not share in her earthly blessings? England was the great source of wealth for the people of Southern Europe, as she has been ever since, and the Italians really thought they had a vested right in the English national gains. When the question came of trying to stop this constant distribution of wealth, this continual shipment of coin from England, the pope and curia were very much stirred up, for all that a man hath will he give for his life, and England was in more senses than one the goose that laid the golden egg.

The strife between England and the papacy was becoming rapidly more bitter, for the needs of the papal court were becoming too great to allow of

any relaxation of the claims, in spite of the sharp protests of the king and parliament. The pope was forced to be bold as to the collection of the papal revenue and the assertion of his authority, or his income and his honor would both be lessened. He sent collectors to England to collect Peter's Pence, tithes, fees for bulls, dispensations and promotions, and voluntary offerings. They were the horse leech's daughters forever crying; Give, give, and there were five things that were never satisfied. They were rightly considered spies on the kingdom, not only to see what liberty the English Church had in the Gospel, but to see where the papal exactions might be increased. Their bearing and claims furnished Wycliffe and the laity with telling arguments against the secularized condition of the Church. The king was summoned to appear before the papal court as his suzerain, and an attempt was made to assert the supremacy of the papal law over the law of the land. The lords and the commons stood by the king, and against the usurpations of the pope, and the anti-papal laws were re-enacted with ever stricter penalties.

To prevent the papal encroachments several laws were passed and their principles reasserted with vigor by successive parliaments. The growth of the farming and merchant classes, the expansion of towns, the increasing power of cities and guilds, led to new rich men rising from below, many buying up the estates of bankrupt country gentlemen,

and joining with the barons and knights in resisting oppression. In the reign of Edward I the Statute of Mortmain had been passed, forbidding the alienation of property to religious corporations. In 1351 the Statute of Provisors was enacted to protect the local patrons, by which the court of Rome could present to no bishopric or benefice, and the papal provisors were forbidden to be introduced into England against the rights of the English Church. Edward III forbade any papal bulls or other documents interfering with private benefices or appointments to be brought into England. In 1353 the Statute of Præmunire forbade any questioning of the judgments made in the king's courts or any appeal to foreign courts. This Statute of Præmunire gave an effectual weapon to the Tudors in their struggle against the papacy, as it prohibited appeals to Rome from the English tribunals, or procuring translations, processes or bulls against the king or the realm. These statutes expressed the national opposition to the papal claims, and were the decisive answer to the pope's assertion of suzerainty over England.

The expensive wars and the increasing burdens upon other classes forced to the front the question of taxation of the clergy. The Black Death had aided the war in carrying off the people, one half of the population had died from the three visitations, the English power had been broken on the Continent, the dreams of conquest had faded, their

own shores were threatened, commerce and trade had been decreased, and the people were heavily burdened with debt and taxes. To support the national defense Edward III in 1371 demanded a subsidy of fifty thousand marks, but the barons replied that it could not be raised unless the Church would pay its share from their property. The ecclesiastics at this time numbered about 25,000 out of the less than 3,000,000 people in England; they held one-third of the land, and enjoyed twice the revenues of the king. The clergy had paid the pope to support their enemies, they should now help the king sustain the national honor and defend the realm. To their protests against such so-called spoliation, a wise old counsellor replied with the fable of the owl. This poor bird was caught without feathers, so in pity the other birds gave it from their abundance. When the time of danger came from the hawk the other birds called upon the owl for their feathers to protect them, but the owl would not give them their own in time of need. Whereupon they flew upon the owl and robbed him of his usurped wealth, as they would the Church if it did not show some national spirit.

In the Good Parliament,—the name is suggestive as to the character of the others,—which met in 1376, the Commons first asserted their right to lead in the affairs of State. The years 1375-6 were years of public disaster, the armies were defeated in France, the plague returned, the Statute of La-

borers irritated the lower classes, the Statutes of Provisors and Præmunire were not kept, and the public mind was aroused over the abuses of the civil power and ecclesiastical authority. Freedom from the Continent brought the king and the nobles face to face with the people of England, a new England whose spirit they did not fully comprehend. Wycliffe was probably a member, part of the lobby perhaps, of the Good Parliament. He seems to have been its directing and inspiring genius, for it was largely influenced by his doctrines or views. It was a people's parliament, and they made vigorous use of their new found privileges. They presented 160 petitions and grievances, made a bold attack on the royal council, and maintained that their bills were to be assented to by the king and become statutes, and not to be changed by royal ordinances. They demanded annual sessions of parliament and free election of knights of the shire, and asserted the right to take the worldly goods of the Church to meet the common danger. They called for speedy justice against all who had misappropriated public funds, and impeached corrupt men, extortioners in taxes and bribe receivers, and compelled the banishment of the king's mistress, Alice Perrers. John of Gaunt blustered against the knights for wanting an accounting of the public funds, and interfering with the public administration, and through his influence many of the most reasonable petitions of parliament were rejected.

This Good Parliament is a land mark in English constitutional development. For the first time in their history the Commons stood before the nobles and through their speaker, Peter de la Mare, denounced the mismanagement of the war, oppressive taxation and the money spent without rendering an account. It is interesting to note that the attempt of the Commons to control Edward III's extravagance led to the fable of the rats and the mice holding a convention to devise ways and means of putting a bell on their great enemy, the cat. The Black Prince, though he had suffered for five years from that fatal Spanish disease, aroused himself to demand reform. Under his influence and that of Wykeham and Wycliffe the Good Parliament passed a number of wise acts and asserted its power over the administration. Twelve petitions were also sent to the king by the parliament against the encroachments of the pope and the drain of English money by his court and by his creatures. They wanted the Statute of Provisors enforced, that no money should be taken out of England, that no papal agent or collector should be allowed in England, that no Englishman should act as papal collector. As they said: "Aliens living in the wicked city of Avignon held and farmed out English preferments,—aliens who had never seen and never would see their parishes,—by which bad Christians the Holy Church is more destroyed than by all the Jews and Saracens in the world." Garnier,

the papal legate, was sending twenty thousand pounds per year of English money to the papal court. He traveled about in lordly style, hated as the English people always hated foreign favorites, collecting papal dues, enforcing papal claims, "greatly vexing the soul of Englishmen." In 1373 parliament had complained of the injury to the Church and State by the pope giving benefices to Frenchmen and Italians, interfering with the rights of election, promoting illiterate rascals to wealthy livings, worth 1,000 marks a year, while the learned doctors had poor places, perhaps 20 marks a year, by which learning and piety were brought into contempt. God gave His people to the pope to be pastured, but they were shorn and neglected by the hireling shepherds. The people of England complained against these papal exactions, with the same reason and the same bitterness as the American colonists against the taxation of England just before the Revolution.

The next parliament, which was packed in the interests of the council, favored the Duke of Lancaster, so it undid the acts of the Good Parliament, and restored the old corrupt government. This parliament also voted a poll tax of four pence on all persons over fourteen, from the noble to the lowest freeman, the rich to aid the poor somewhat in the payment. This was a kind of tax before unheard of, and certain to meet with determined resistance. The first parliament under Richard II

in the fall of 1377 was in the matter of reform the true successor of the Good Parliament. They elected Peter de la Mare, who had been imprisoned in Nottingham Castle for his loyalty to the Commons, again to be their speaker. John of Gaunt withdrew from the court, leaving the field clear for the vigorous body of men who composed the new parliament. They demanded the confirmation of their rights, complained of administration wrongs, purveyance, abuses of justice, official oppression, and the state of the prisons. They discussed the mismanagement and expenditures of the government, demanded an open account of the receipts and expenses, and appointed two of their number to oversee the disbursement of the grant they made. This parliament, too, was hostile to Rome, seeking to banish foreign holders of English Church revenues, and to apply their incomes to the defense of the realm. Papal appointments were still common in spite of the statutes and English gold was still flowing to foreign lands. The control over all bishops, all preferments or Church nominations and translations with their consequent annates, was an immense source of revenue. When an important bishopric became vacant the pope would transfer four or five if possible by raising them to the next higher bishopric, and then claim the firstfruits from each incumbent. The Romans farmed the taxes, and the papal court farmed the bishoprics, enriching the pope, the cardinals and

the brokers who trafficked in holy offices. Appeals were made to the pope on all kinds of questions, but the great advantage of having a supreme tribunal for all Christendom was vitiated by the partiality, delay and corruption of the papal curia.

At this time of national distress there was a large amount of money in the hands of the papal agent still in England. The practical question was, could the parliament use this money for the country's needs. Wycliffe was asked for his opinion. He decided that the law of nature, the law of the gospel and the law of conscience, agreed that it could be withheld and applied to the national defense. If the money were taken from the kingdom, he argued, it would go to strengthen the king's enemies, for the income of the French clergy from English sources was six thousand pounds a year. If England gave anything to the pope she gave it as alms, not as tribute. The pope was rich, did not need alms, but England was needy, and required all her resources. The pope, too, demanded a subsidy from the English clergy with which to rescue French prisoners. The clergy themselves were many and burdensome, and the money being taken from the kingdom, the people were unable to support the Church with its hordes of officials, or to provide for the national defense. There was not much money in circulation, and if it were carried out of the kingdom, it would greatly curtail all business transactions, reduce wages or

chances of employment and stifle trade to the injury of the trading class, the laborers and the poor. The pope's jubilee, which had been held every one hundred years, had been shortened to fifty and then twenty-five to get additional income, and it required men with rakes on these occasions to haul off the tables into baskets the gifts of the pilgrims to the papacy. As the money supply was lessened from the papal exactions and expenses of the war, the demands on the people, peasants included, were greatly increased, and the burdens became unendurable.

The papal pretensions at this time included: First, the right to summon councils, to confirm their acts, and practically to originate their decrees. Second, to control all bishops and ecclesiastics and to claim annates or firstfruits of benefices. Third, the right to hear appeals of all kinds, which encouraged disloyalty, immorality, oppression, injustice, for the delays and venality of the papal court were proverbial. Fourth, universal power of absolution and dispensation. Fifth, the power of taxation over Churches, to be exercised according to circumstances. It was oppressively and incessantly exercised in England, for that country was growing rich and its churches were a good mark for spoliation. Sixth, to send legates to the kingdom, whose authority was above that of the regular clergy, who also were to be kind of spies and to enforce the papal decrees. Besides all this, the

canon law codified and strengthened the pope's authority, for it raised up a body of laws and lawyers who asserted the supremacy of the Holy See. This hierarchal theory was almost perfect in itself, but it broke down before the strong kings and the vigorous spirit of nationality which was arising in Europe.

CHAPTER VII.

THE STATESMAN.

WYCLIFFE belonged to the noble band of English ecclesiastical statesmen, represented by such men as Saint Dunstan, William of Wykeham, Walter de Merton and Cardinal Wolsey. They were men of great strength of character, of broad view, in touch with what would now be called world politics. They understood the principles of government, the history of their own and other peoples, the various phases of human nature, and the diplomatic position of the different nations. From their education in canon and civil law, from their faculties well-developed by a long process of training, from their acquaintance in foreign lands, from their being a part of that ecclesiastical system that strove to govern all Europe as an appanage of the Holy See, they were well qualified for the position as royal counselors. They had usually traveled, knew the world conditions and problems, and kept England in touch with the Continental movement and civilization. A rational foundation for the statutes to be enacted was constantly needed, and it witnessed strongly to the learning and public standing of the clergy that they were so frequently

consulted or called to office. They were patrons of architecture, promoters of trade and improved agriculture, furthering the condition of the peasants as over against the lord and his retainers. Several of them are noted for establishining colleges at Oxford where young men might be trained to support and guide their country in times of danger. As we take that delightful walk from Coventry to Kenilworth we are reminded of that patriotic subject of Queen Elizabeth who planted the six rows of oak trees that the gallant little island might never lack for timber to build ships to fight the Spaniards. These ecclesiastical statesmen planted yet more wisely in founding schools where English heroes and governors might be bred, the future founders of empires beyond the sea.

In a national crisis, more important perhaps than any other of these men had met, Wycliffe freely gave his country the wisest counsel and the most faithful service. In response to a summons from the leaders of the parliament, he left the quiet of the cloister, his most cherished abiding-place, and entered an active career. Like Diocletian engrossed with his cabbages, public life had little attraction for him, but at his country's call he must needs enter the arena, and there he soon caught the spirit of the conflict. It was a tribute to learning and to Wycliffe personally that the council appealed to him, the clearest thinker and most forcible writer in all England, for a state-

ment of the grounds of resistance to the exactions of the Church. He was the type of a man for a statesman, with a large mind and a courageous soul, with a broad view-point, seeing clearly the relation of cause and effect, with moral earnestness and that devotion to a great cause that gives insight and force. One of the most remarkable characteristics of the British race is its fertility in great leaders; men who are transformed into heroes by the inspiration of a great idea, or who overcome all difficulties and opposition by the force of a great character.

We may well imagine the effect on Dr. Wycliffe, with his Northern temper and his passion for justice, of the quarrel between the pope and the king. Patriotism, trained intelligence, moral and religious temper and love of the people, led him to be the champion of his country, its laws and its welfare. If Englishmen owed their first duty to England, and yet were to be true sons of the Church, Wycliffe must show that national loyalty was consistent with the Christian faith. His appeal was to the Scriptures as the highest expression of Divine law, and in opposition to the man-made statutes of the Roman Church. He courageously and vigorously defended the parliament in their repudiation of the papal claim to tribute founded upon a bargain made with John to consider the pope as his suzerain. Like William III his frail body carried a temper quick and restless, an immense

energy, an immovable conviction, an unconquerable pride. In the spirit of the early Britons in their first contest with the Roman hierarchy, he zealously defended the independence of the English people, and laid the foundation for the establishment two centuries later of the English national Church. In his reply to the council he startled the traditional orthodox world, accustomed to centuries of passive obedience, by laying down the principle that king and parliament are supreme over ecclesiastics as well as over laymen. The parliament in harmony with his suggestions asserted the king's absolute independence in all temporal concerns. "The kings of England neither have been wont to answer nor ought to answer touching their rights in the said kingdom, or any other temporal rights, before any judge ecclesiastical or secular." The court was well pleased with this doctrine of the independence of the civil power, and the right of the parliament to refuse tribute, for it meant so much the more for the royal coffers. Money in those days was scarce, wagon loads were taken for the papal jubilees, and the scarcity affected trade and the royal revenues, the luxuries of the barons and comforts of the people, the equipment of the churches and payment of poor priests.

Of all the scholastic doctors, those of England had been the most keen and the most daring in philosophical speculations, and in their application to the practical affairs of government or life. Their

distance from Rome, their love of liberty, and, as William the Silent said, the free North wind, had made them lovers of freedom. Wycliffe had before his public career began defended the secular clergy against the regulars, the monks and the friars, showing thus early the acuteness and vigor of his logical powers. He now about 1370 brought forth his work on Dominion, a careful philosophical study of the limits of human lordship, and a Scholastic statement of an ideal society based on the teachings of the Gospel. In this work the great scholastic conceives of this world as established on the feudal plan, God being the universal sovereign and all people bound to obey him. The pope in certain respects might be his vicegerent, but his authority was founded on moral obligation. Rulers of all classes must give service if they are to expect obedience, or good statesmanship is best shown by good stewardship. He had the same lofty idea as the truest exponents of chivalry, "noblesse oblige," a man's rank determining not so much his power as his duty. Unfortunately the feudal lords, the Church lords especially, were not fulfilling their obligations, but were in their selfishness placing ever heavier burdens on their people. If the pope or a bishop claims obedience as a representative of God he must claim it on the same basis as God does; viz.: righteousness, love, helpfulness. God seeks nothing for Himself but all things for His people; they to bring tithes into His

storehouse that He may pour them out a blessing. Wycliffe taught that all power and dominion are from God, and are granted not to one vicar, the pope, but to all the faithful. The king is God's vicar as well as the pope; the royal power is as sacred as the ecclesiastical, and is complete over temporal things, including the temporalities of the Church. He applied this theory also to the individual conscience, a far more important step, for it was the seed germ of the Reformation.

All dominion and authority must have some basis, from God, from Divine appointment, from conquest, from heredity, from popular election. Contrary to the Anglo-Saxon spirit the French political philosophers inquire as to this basis of government, asking why one man should obey another, even though the latter might be chosen by the people. The pope by his demands upon England was forcing parliament and Wycliffe as their representative, to consider this whole question of dominion, and the result must be disastrous to the papal claims. From his English practical nature that weds action to thought, Wycliffe had combined the views of Marsiglio, Ockham and Fitzralph into an ideal system to the gratification of many a student at Oxford and statesman at London. As Disraeli said: "The feudal system may have worn out, but its main principle, that the tenure of property should be the fulfillment of duty, is the essence of good government." Wycliffe

finally went so far as to maintain that the pope's claim to be God's vicegerent on earth, and to guide the consciences of all men was a blasphemous usurpation; that each individual was responsible to heaven for his own acts and thoughts. All laymen, he held, may be priests, and priests are not above laymen, for all hold of God and on the same terms of service. A Christian might be obedient to the king, the pope or the priest, but he himself held dominion directly from God. Not a mediating priesthood but the throne of God is the tribunal of personal appeal. Instead of all feudal obligations being owed first to the pope, all men are tenants in chief under God, and hold from Him all they are or possess. In claiming to be demesne lord of all people, and to interfere between them and their Divine suzerain, the pope is himself a rebel against God, a usurper of authority over men.

When Wycliffe asserted that a man's character, not his office, entitled him to lordship, he placed himself in opposition to the whole mediæval régime. He dared to teach that no man in mortal sin has a right to possessions; that if the pope became a bad man he had no right to govern. God owns all, and by sin a man robs God of His dues. He taught an ideal socialism in his statement, that the righteous man is lord of all things; therefore, they must possess the universe in common. He believed in the community of goods apparently, but warns his hearers not to resort to force, but to be law-abiding,

except in opposition to tyranny. In the new feudalism which he would establish each man would hold directly of God by the gift of His grace, but strictly upon the terms of being obedient to the Divine Will. He maintained that if he served God truly, any rightly ordained priest had as much power for the remission of sins as the pope or any of the higher clergy. The pope also for his own good and that of the Church was not to be entangled with the business of this world. Yet that was the very thing the pope wanted and must have in ever-increasing measure if he were to be happy. He thirsted for the bauble of dominion and forgot the higher distinction of being the chief servant for the good of all. In opposition to the assumptions of the hierarchy Wycliffe claimed that the control of the nation's territory or money, including the often ill-gotten and misused revenues of the Church, should not lie with the clergy, but with the secular statesmen having experience of temporal things. His position in brief was: The Roman Church had no claim to headship over all Churches, temporal privileges can not be defended by spiritual censures, the Church should be confined to its spiritual functions, ecclesiastical courts should be subject to the civil courts, pilgrimages and image worship are akin to idolatry, priests have no power to absolve from sin, the Bible is the one ground of faith, and it is the right of every man to examine it for himself.

Among the many dates for the beginning of the

Reformation we might well emphasize the publication of Wycliffe's theory of dominion. It was another if not a greater Magna Charta of English liberty. By his denial that the pope was the supreme head of the Church, Christ alone being the head, and by his denial of Peter's primacy upon which the whole papal theory depended, he undermined the entire work of the great popes during the Middle Ages. By his claim that in civil affairs the power of the king was above that of the pope, and that men could appeal from ecclesiastical tribunals to the secular, he established the independence of the State, and even its right to govern the Church if the need should arise. It is the province of philosophy to find the reason of things, to justify not only the ways of God but the ways of men to themselves. In Wycliffe's political speculation men of thought were astonished at his clear-cut arguments, by the authorities he cited, and by the strength and vigor of his reasoning. He loved books, the pursuit of knowledge, his native land and his countrymen, but his immense learning or devotion to things of the mind, did not prevent his seeing the need of practical reform, or take away his courage in trying to secure it. Deserting his order because of his devotion to his country, Wycliffe united with the statesmen of his day for the public good, showing that loyalty to duty which is the first requisite for men to secure a place on the roll of English heroes.

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The cry against papal encroachments was being extended by the barons and people to denunciation of the wealth and power of the clergy. Wycliffe maintained that the ungodly bishop or priest had no right to temporal possessions given him in trust for the discharge of his high mission; a most unwelcome doctrine to the mediæval hierarchy. Many of the sincere friends of the Church were puzzled over the question whether it must be deprived of its temporal possessions as a means of securing ecclesiastical reform. Were wealth, power, luxury, dominion too much for the Church to carry and be efficient in its work? Was money eating like a canker, and was a process of blood-letting necessary? Wycliffe believed that the property of the Church was a curse, that it drew away from the primitive simplicity and made her forget her divine mission. Earnest and devoted men in all countries were trying to restore the Church to its proper sphere for the sake of its own purity and influence. Christ and his apostles, they said, held no property, and if the popes were his successors they were to hold none, and to levy no contributions, but to be supported by the free gifts of the faithful. This was an admirable doctrine for the spiritual clergy, but for the worldly clergy it was in the highest sense anathema. Worldliness among the clergy, like lies to the fabricator, demands always more worldliness to support itself.

Whether it was our John Wycliffe who was

warden of Canterbury Hall at Oxford, we do not know. If he was wrongfully deprived of that office, John of Gaunt compensated him in 1376 for its loss by making him rector of Lutterworth, where he could have a small but free field for the teaching of his new principles. We would certainly like to occupy a pew at this parish church some Sunday morning, while Dr. Evangelicus was discoursing on the practical affairs of Church and State, for though the language might be somewhat difficult to follow, we would readily sympathize not only with the form but with the view-point of the great preacher. Of all the great Schoolmen Wycliffe holds the nearest place to us, because he grasped the various problems of constructive thought and molded them into a practical system along the lines of which the Anglo-Saxon race could develop. In both Church and State he formulated the principles along which English history would be written in the onward march of events for the next four centuries. The nation had been growing in the feeling of self-importance, first among the kings and nobles and clergy; then among the scholars, the rich merchants and finally the common people. They had maintained by revolt after revolt, and continual re-enactment of the principles of Magna Charta, their rights to their own property with no arbitrary assessments. Their self-respect and national self-worship had been humiliated by the papal assumptions, and particularly

by the demand for King John's tribute. In response the young English nation with Wycliffe as their leader put forth their strength like the young Hercules, to strangle the twin serpents of Church and State despotism.

A few writers, those of strong ecclesiastical proclivities usually, still attack Wycliffe's teaching, as subversive of due respect for the Church and established institutions. In reading Rokeby one wonders whether in his character of Michael de Wycliffe, Sir Walter Scott did not represent the High Church opinion of the great reformer. The carrying of Wycliffe's views to their logical, dangerous, and absurd conclusion is a work befitting such narrow tempers, but is not a fair interpretation of his doctrine. He did teach the universal possession of the righteous, as we sometimes claim that the clear-minded and pure-hearted own the earth, but he distinctly forbade any attempt of his disciples to claim their heritage. He was too practical a man to be caught by a theory, or led away by enthusiasm. He was not of the spirit of Barnabas, expecting a communistic society of believers, but of Paul taking a collection in all the churches for the poor at Jerusalem; promoting not an equal brotherhood of enjoyment but an unequal brotherhood of service. Wycliffe was to furnish a scientific, workable, defensible basis for the action of parliament in resisting the claims of the pope. All we have a right to require of him is that

his positions shall be sound and equitable, stating clearly the fundamental principles on which the parliament or council could act. He was not responsible for the fact that his ideas could be perverted by greedy nobles, bigoted Churchmen, or ignorant priests in their zeal for popular applause. He saw clearly the lines on which effectual reforms in Church and State could be established, other men must apply his principles to practical government. He deserves unstinted praise for laying so well the foundation of our great Anglo-Saxon temple of liberty, and every free born American who sails past Bartholdi's statue in New York Harbor will honor his memory.

In return for his defense of the national policy as over against the papacy, Wycliffe was made a king's chaplain, and thus brought into closer relation to the court, the council, and the parliament. By his ability, wisdom, and patriotism he obtained the favor of the king, and of the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the friendship of John of Gaunt and several other men of distinction. In 1374 he was named on a royal commission to Bruges to confer with representatives from the pope on the question of the papal right to interfere with Church appointments in England. Wycliffe's standing was manifest from his being named second on the list and from his being paid twenty shillings a day, then a large amount. Bruges was at this time a prosperous commercial city, its

wealth being indicated by the report that at a public function six hundred of its ladies outshone the Queen of France. These Flemish towns had the spirit of resistance to civil and ecclesiastical despotism, and the embassy gave Wycliffe a two months' schooling in a science which he was eager to learn. He was impressed at Bruges, much as Luther was at Rome, with the ambition, covetousness and faithlessness of the pope. The character of the Catholic hierarchy was revealed to him as he had never conceived it, and he was led to believe that the whole system was Antichrist, with no redeeming feature about it. With his eyes thus opened by experience to the abuses of the papal court, he began to preach and teach and write boldly, against spiritual wickedness in high places. With his fiery temper stirred with indignation he became, like Horatius at the bridge, the zealous and efficient champion of the people against their foreign oppressors and the whole mass of their abettors within the kingdom.

Politics is a treacherous sea, and the haven is not always where the flag of freedom beckons. The Council of Bruges was really a victory for the pope, some concessions being granted, but the Statute of Provisors remained a dead letter. Neither the pope nor the king wanted the matter settled, for they were both double-faced, two sovereign thieves preying upon the people. It also suggests in passing the superiority in diplomacy of the quick witted Celts over their more sluggish Anglo-Saxon

opponents, that in his embassy to Bruges at the same time to secure peace, John of Gaunt was also outgeneraled, as he had been on the battlefield. The English kings needed the authority of the pope to confirm their rule, needed the sanction of the Church for personal or absolute government. So the pope and the king united in the spoliation and enslavement of the Church; the pope appointed the king's nominees, and the purses of both the pope and the king were enlarged. James I, the wisest fool in Christendom, showed his kingly wisdom in his expression, "No bishop, no king." The English kings did not want to put away definitely this handy resort to Rome against the English clergy, and the papal exactions, which excited the anger of the people, were in several ways profitable to the crown. They therefore made a bargain with the pope against the interests of the private patrons, whether personal owners or chapters of religious houses, and provisions and reservations still went on to the scandal of all decent men.

CHAPTER VIII.

OPPOSITION.

When Wycliffe entered the arena as the champion of the rights of the English king and people, as over against the papacy and the Church, he must have seen the bitter opposition he would meet. This would turn to personal animosity when he advocated the taxing of the clergy for the benefit of the State, and preached evangelical poverty from the example of the Master. He was attacking the order in the tenderest place, when he proposed to confiscate their property and to deprive them of their means of living. Two main principles of the Magna Charta, the bulwark of English liberty, maintained the freedom of the person and the right to property. In opposing Wycliffe's propositions they seemed to be well within their constitutional rights. The English clergy of that time were not worse than those before and after, they were simply human, decidedly human we may say, moved by the ambitions and passions of the race. They were devoted to their order, righteously so they judged, and to their own welfare. They had never thought of sacrificing themselves personally for the poor, no more than Dives was concerned over his

personal relations to Lazarus. The whole ecclesiastical organization was to serve and help the people, and of this they were the honored and efficient instruments. Evangelical piety was ridiculous to them, the established Church services and rites were the proper means of salvation, and to these they gave scrupulous attention. Their high offices and large revenues belonged to their position and ability; if they were living on the fat of the land they were only getting their deserts, and that they were worshiping God and mammon did not occur to their thought.

Devotion to the things of the mind and the spirit, which would characterize Wycliffe for example, would not appeal to the English hierarchy. That they should resist the Church through loyalty to some higher truth would be absurdity. That faith takes refuge, not in the Church, but in the individual men, would be well-nigh blasphemy. There was something heroic in this devotion to their order, or brotherhood, an unselfish selfishness that often deceives the very elect. It led to a feeling of superiority, of separation from the laity and lower clergy, of bitterness against opponents, culminating in persecution and bloodshed. It is easy for a man to start in with devotion to a lofty purpose and then by a curious somersault get to live for his organization and himself. Any one, particularly a member of his own order, who disputes its claim or subjects it to injury, is a blasphemer, a

traitor, a hypocrite, worthy only of ostracism or death. Hatred of traitors is so commendable that this intense antagonism to the betrayers and despoilers of the divine priesthood seemed in the highest measure heroic and grand.

There was a fundamental opposition between Wycliffe and the English Church officials, born of their different temperament, training, view-point, and personal interests. We must imagine the world of 1370 and resurrect the conditions to intelligently know the leader, who out of limitations and weakness and trials arose a strong man, a hero, a saint; one who gave the standard by which we judge the men of his times. The name Dr. Evangelicus, familiarly applied to him by his students, shows his aim and his spirit; that against the sacerdotal and hierarchal system he definitely put the evangelical. All his heresies grew out of his idea that there was a Divine law, the law of the Gospel, God's law, which was the only and absolute rule of the Christian Church; above all human law and not intrusted to any earthly official or institution. He called upon the pope and the bishops to lay aside their purple, to live frugally, to watch and pray and to do the work of an evangelist, and the whole heart of the laity said, Amen. He would reduce or rather exalt the clergy to their simple, spiritual function, that they might find their joy and their reward in tending the flock of Christ, as he did at Lutterworth or as Cardinal Wolsey later did at

York. He attacked Church endowments, the monks who add house to house, field to field; the clergy who seek temporal goods and interfere in secular affairs. The barons wanted to plunder the rich ecclesiastics for their own ends; Wycliffe maintained that Church endowments were a positive evil, seriously interfering with spiritual power. Unfortunately he was regarded as a tool of the Duke of Lancaster, desiring the confiscation of the Church's property, when his honest aim was the purification of the Church and the exaltation of her ministry. He was the vigorous enemy of the great land-holding prelates and of the possessioner monks; the clergy, both regular and secular, should be followers of Christ, but not like the disciples the night of the betrayal—afar off.

William of Wykeham, the strongest clerical opponent of John of Gaunt and of Wycliffe, was a fine example of the ecclesiastical, worldly minded statesman. Rising by his own ability, the builder of Windsor Castle for the king, he became Bishop of Winchester, a member of the royal council and Lord Chancellor. He had been regarded by the Black Prince with special affection, but was violently hated by his brother, the Duke, as he was generally known, who in 1371 succeeded in driving him from office. The good bishop, however, lost little by being deprived of his secular office and temporalities, except the humiliation of seeking reinstatement through that questionable channel, the

king's mistress. At the beginning of the next reign he was reinstated, for he was supported by the clergy and by the knights of the shire, then the most important part of the House of Commons. He was a greater statesman and a better man than John of Gaunt, and by the aid of his brother clergy finally outgeneraled him. With us his chief title to favor is his founding of New College, Oxford, and the first great public school at Winchester, which aided, perhaps more largely than any other school, to "smooth the steep and rugged pathway by which poverty must climb the height of knowledge and distinction."

But this William of Wykeham had another side to his nature. He was a thoroughly able man, but used his talents for money-getting, greedy of place and power, a pluralist of the most pronounced type, holding at one time twelve livings, a man of enormous wealth. From the example of simony by the pope and the curia these chief Churchmen absorbed the revenues, living in luxury, while poor priests were left to fulfill the Church offices and to starve. Wykeham was governed by the spirit of his order and of the times, and was not sincerely devoted to the truth, to the people or to the Gospel. He did not see the deep undercurrent of thought and feeling that was transforming England into a vigorous opponent of the policy to which he was wedded. The spirit of the pope and the Church was his model and like the greater part of the hierarchy, he

was a follower of Peter, as head of the Church, much more than of Christ. He was more responsible for his beliefs and acts than Courtenay, for he saw more clearly and was not so violent or so strongly moved by his prejudices. That these high Church officials were worldly and selfish is plain enough, but they were probably self-deceived, not knowing how they were grinding the faces of the poor, producing poverty as the antithesis of their extravagance. To Wycliffe they were traitors to God, to Christ their Master, to the Gospel, to the people and to their country. Religious leaders who are false to their trust, who take advantage of people's superstition to rob them, deserve the mark of Cain with which history brands them.

There was evidently a serious conflict between the Church as an institution and the Gospel of Christ, which is supposed to be its basis. It is natural for men to identify their own system with the Christian faith, to make the test of Christian truth the needs of their Church creed or polity. There is a constant dualism or conflict between the simple word of God and some other means of salvation, a tendency to confound the authority of a Divine Savior with the authority of an institution, built upon his teaching. Not only Latin theology but the whole relation of the priesthood to the State and to society depended on the authority of the Roman Church. That the temple and the altar, sacrifice and priesthood, were all abolished in Christ, and

that each disciple was to be his own priest, depending alone upon God and the Bible, meant the destruction of the whole papal system. The clergy of Wycliffe's time identified the Church with their own form of ecclesiastical organization, and believed that the Holy Spirit spoke through them, that apostolic succession was transmitted in their ordination, and their separation from the laity was both of office and nature. The invisible Christ was not a sufficient head of the Church, but was supplemented by the papal system, the power of the keys, with the pope at its head. It would be difficult for God to govern all the world without intermediaries, such as the pope and the bishops, and the hierarchy on earth corresponded with the hierarchy in heaven. Roman imperialism had cast its cloak over the Church, implicit obedience including the intellect and the conscience was required, and appeal lay not to the Scriptures, but to tradition and authority.

In having John of Gaunt for a friend and patron Wycliffe found personal protection and an opportunity to express his views for his country's weal, but he shared in large measure the unpopularity of the then best hated man in England. His being the king's chaplain gave him the privilege of preaching in London, and in his sermons there, he proclaimed his doctrines as plainly as among his own friends at Oxford. According to the Anglical Chronicle, "Many great lords of the realm, or more rightly, I should call them devils, embraced his mad

doctrines, and they hardened him in his effort to blunt the sword of St. Peter, and protected him with the secular arm, lest that same sword should cut him off. He drew after him many of the citizens of London into the bottomless pit of error. He was an eloquent man, and pretended to look down on worldly possessions as things transitory and fleeting, in comparison with the things of eternity. He ever ran from church to church, and scattered his mad lies in the ears of very many." These observations of Wycliffe's contemporaries are delightful reading, they are so whole-souled in their hatred of a clerical opponent.

It is probable that Wycliffe's eloquent and vigorous sermons in London, denouncing the corruption of the Church and the worldliness of her clergy, were the immediate cause of his being summoned for trial at St. Paul's Cathedral, February 19, 1377. His health seems to have been already broken, for he came leaning on his staff, girded in a long robe, with his white beard reaching down to his breast. Courtenay, the Bishop of London, wished to assail John of Gaunt and his political principles, and so attacked Wycliffe, his friend and advocate, as the citizens of Athens attacked Pericles through Phidias the famous sculptor, or through Aspasia his brilliant consort. The investigation was held in that noble Gothic church which till the fire in 1666 stood upon the site of the present St. Paul's, though the great spire reaching 520

feet toward heaven ought to have been a messenger of peace on earth. The bishops sat in Lady Chapel, surrounded by friendly barons, prelates, and doctors from all parts of England. Four Dominican friars, the reputed defenders of orthodoxy, were with Wycliffe to defend him from the charge of heresy. A tumultuous mob also rushed in and filled the church, the popular feeling being very strong against the duke. He was a proud feudal lord, a defender of abuses against popular rights, and supposed enemy of his nephew Richard, the son of the people's favorite, the Black Prince. The Lord Marshal, Lord Percy, who with Gaunt accompanied Wycliffe, ordered his men to clear a way to Lady Chapel. Courtenay objected to this exhibition of lay authority in his cathedral. As only Wycliffe was left standing of the noble company, Lord Percy ordered a chair to be given him, when a violent dispute arose between the Bishop of London and the Duke of Lancaster. It seemed to have been another display of that personal rivalry which once disturbed the peace of archangels. Wycliffe was not strong and the duke claimed that as a doctor he ought to be seated, while the bishop contended that as a defendant on trial he should not. According to the clerical account Courtenay kept his temper, but the duke in a rage swore he would drag the bishop out of the church by the hair. The people of London were loyal to their bishop, and would not see him abused by John of Gaunt, so

the meeting broke up in disorder before nine o'clock in the morning. We greatly wish that the examination might have proceeded, at least far enough for the charges to be stated, and for Wycliffe to have had a chance to answer them. The duke threatened to take away the city's liberty, so the next day the rioters attacked his palace, the stately Savoy; but the Bishop of London interfered, for he feared the results of an insurrection, and besides the quarrels of Herod and Pilate are not to be taken too seriously. The duke sought refuge with the Princess of Wales, the widow of the Black Prince, and as she was dear to the citizens the riot subsided.

If we call Wycliffe the protagonist of the early reform movement, we might name as the antagonist or deuteragonist the energetic and enthusiastic Bishop of London, William Courtenay, the great-grandson of Edward I. Unfortunately for himself and the world his ancestor's noble qualities were in him turned in the wrong direction, the narrow field of duty centered in himself and his profession afflicting him with political blindness. He was a characteristic ecclesiastic, so devoted to his order that he did not hear the larger call and narrowly missed being a great man. He had marked ability, was imperious in temper, from his high birth he expected the highest position in the Church and was the vigorous, uncompromising champion of orthodoxy. He hated Wycliffe's doctrines of pov-

erty and dominion, and later as primate with nine bishops pronounced him a heretic. This young and zealous bishop was determined to use the machinery of Church and State to crush the disturber of Israel, for he was the champion of the National Church against the opponents of the clergy, the Hammer of Heretics, as was Charles Martel on the field of Tours. He himself had protested vigorously against the heavy taxation of the Church by either pope or king, and yet he was a confirmed pluralist. A patriotic and anti-papal Englishman, he was yet ready to use the papal mandate against Wycliffe and reform, playing into the hands of the oppressor of his people to save the privileges of his order.

Charges against Wycliffe had been prepared by the monks at Oxford as early as 1375, and in May, 1377, the pope issued five bulls against him. Three of these were addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London as papal commissioners, instructing them to inquire into Wycliffe's teaching, to seize and imprison him if heretical, and to deliver him over to the pope, when he would doubtless have perished in some papal prison. The fourth bull was addressed to the king to secure his co-operation, and the fifth to the University of Oxford, blaming them for their laxity in allowing tares to be sown among the wheat, and commanding them to seize and deliver Wycliffe to the commissioners. It was a well laid plan to overcome

and perhaps destroy the rash reformer by getting him into the pope's power, with whom the final decision lay. But the death of Edward III annulled the bull addressed to him, the authorities at Oxford were indignant at the interference with their liberty of administration, and with the spirit prevailing at the university they did not have the power to apprehend Wycliffe. In two of the papal bulls Wycliffe was accused of heresy, the charge of heresy being a good one to fix on him to discredit his political work. The specifications against him concerned the relations of the Church to the State, and the claims that censures could not affect a man's civil position, and that the Church could not hold endowments. Wycliffe denied the right of the Church to exact money payments or to defend temporal privileges by spiritual censures, maintained that the Church might be deprived of its property for defect of duty, and defended the subjection of the ecclesiastics to the civil tribunal. This bold defiance won the support of the English people, and showed the temper of the times, and the growing severance between the Church and the Nation.

The papal commissioners understood too well the temper of the English parliament and people to press the harsh measures urged by the papal bulls, so the archbishop sent a milder summons for the Oxford authorities to send Wycliffe to London. The reformer was not slow in answering the sum-

mons, for he was glad to meet his opponents and present his arguments. He had faith, too, in the truth and in the people, and knew that the trial would spread his views over England. No doubt he needed strong faith and a stout heart to stand before the dignitaries of the Church, armed with the papal bull, but he was fighting his Master's and the people's cause. In this trial at Lambeth early in 1378, Wycliffe was attended by a more formidable body of defenders than those of the Earl Marshal at St. Paul's, for the people of London, since John of Gaunt's retirement from court, had become his vigorous adherents. "Fear not the bishops," they cried as he entered the palace, for they understood, as did the people of Worms when Luther appeared before the diet, that he was their representative, fighting their battle for them. He was met with nineteen propositions taken from his works which had been sent to Rome and returned as the basis of his trial. Two or three of these will illustrate their scope:

"The whole human race concurring without Christ, have not power absolutely to ordain that Peter and all his descendants should rule over the world politically forever."

"It is not possible that a man should be excommunicated to his damage, unless he be excommunicated first and principally by himself."

"It is lawful for kings, in cases limited by law, to take away the temporalities from clergy who habitually abuse them."

Again we wish that these propositions might have been discussed, but the menacing looks and gestures of the citizens frightened the prelates, for the people of London in those days were not to be lightly faced. Fortunately for the commissioners a messenger, Sir Lewis Clifford, came from the king's mother forbidding them to pass sentence on Wycliffe, and they were compelled to let their victim go. As a parting thrust they commanded him to keep silent in respect to his views, an injunction he was not expected to heed. An indignant monk records that after the message from the queen mother the words of the prelates were "as smooth as oil." We probably would not be wrong in imagining that Archbishop Sudbury, if not Bishop Courtenay, was glad that the whole business was over.

The trial of Wycliffe was soon overshadowed by an unfortunate circumstance, the famous pollution of Westminster Abbey, which occurred August 11, 1378. Two squires had captured a Spanish noble and held him, or rather his son, for whom he had been exchanged, for a ransom of 60,000 florins. For some reason, perhaps to facilitate the liberation of English prisoners, the council wanted the two men to release their captive on easier terms. They refused, were sent to the tower, escaped, and took refuge in Westminster Abbey. The council ordered the keeper of the tower to re-arrest the prisoners wherever they might find them. Buxhall, the keeper, a reckless man, entered the Abbey, seized

one of the men, and went up into the choir for the other. This one first struck at the guard with his sword and then took refuge at the altar. The guard pursued him and in the scuffle he was killed and one of the attendants of the church severely wounded. This was the greatest outrage in an English cathedral since the death of Thomas à Becket, and the clergy of England were incensed at the sacrilege. Buxhall and his keepers were all excommunicated, and as the Abbey was declared polluted the next parliament had to meet at Gloucester. The attempt to fix the blame for this high-handed violation of the sacred edifice on John of Gaunt will hardly hold, for he was then on his unfortunate expedition against St. Malo. The clergy were, however, violently stirred against Wycliffe, for he dared defend the council in their order, and claimed that church sanctuary intended for men in danger was not to become a refuge for fugitives from constituted authorities. Wycliffe was undoubtedly right, but the hierarchy never forgave his desertion of the order when one of their most sacred sanctuaries had been so vilely desecrated. It is a curious instance of loyalty to feudal obligation that when the affair was finally settled, and the remaining squire had agreed to release his captive, he in response to the summons to produce the young noble pointed to the valet, who had been his body servant through all those years.

The antagonism, really irreconcilable, between

Wycliffe and the clerical oligarchy is the key to the religious and largely to the political history of England in that age. The English clergy were clearly not Bible Christians, Gospel preachers, exemplars of God's saving grace. The Bible set a standard which they did not wish to follow, the life of Christ and the ideals of the New Testament condemned their lives, and reverence for Jesus Christ, the hope of any age, was lost in devotion to the organized Church. Tried by the book on which their authority rested and to preach which was their one mission they were found wanting. Their Master had nailed to the cross all selfishness, hypocrisy, avarice, cowardice; but they could not drink His cup or be baptized with His baptism. They looked for grace from without, not from within, to build up the image of God in the soul by external acts, such as baptism, confession, the mass, and pilgrimages. Many of the clergy in Wycliffe's time were no doubt upright, even in their way conscientious men; but they saw the Church as an institution, with its head and members, its doctrines and ritual, its offers of salvation to all through obedience and communion. The Church, they insisted, is the mediator between God and man, it will save people if they will submit to its guidance, and to its sanction and interpretation the Holy Scriptures owe their authority. There was only one thing lacking in this magnificent organization and thoroughly articulated means of saving the world,

and that was the Spirit of Christ and of real brotherhood. Lacking that it was no longer a Church, but an institution. As when we go to a friend's house and find the family gone, the fire out, the rooms bare and cold; it is no longer a home, but simply a building.

On the other hand Wycliffe, like John at Patmos, saw visions of a new heaven and a new earth in which dwelleth righteousness, of which Christ was the light and the Gospel the means. He had formed a spiritual conception of the Christian Church, with Christ, not the pope, as its head, and the law of the Gospel, not the papal curia, as the final authority. His heresy consisted in setting before men an ideal Church, with an intense longing for spiritual wealth and apostolic fervor, an embodiment in head and members of the spirit of Jesus. He believed there was salvation for every man simply through the grace of God, and he would not be disloyal to his Divine Master or cease to declare His will in opposition to popes or prelates. He claimed that the pope's superiority should manifest itself in the fruits of the Spirit, in meekness, long-suffering, temperance, charity; the hardest of all tests for worldly minded popes or priests. He opposed pluralities and the extravagance which they fed, the tables of the clergy with their costly viands, the jeweled miter and costly robes of the bishops, the spirit of pomp and pride, their selfish cowardice and robbery of their parishioners. He

wanted to restore the Church to its apostolic simplicity, purity, strength, and evangelical power; substituting the law of God for the traditions of the Church, the plain Gospel for monkish fables or papal decrees. To Wycliffe individual men were of more value than the institutions of Church or State, and his independent spirit rebelled against the attempt of institutions to dominate every individual aim, interest, and affection. He had, as every earnest man has, a passion for justice that is the reflection of the Divine, that will not rest till justice is being done on the earth, and will give his life to establish its reign. It may seem strange that out of all the learned, and wise, and in many ways sincere men of his time, Wycliffe had to stand alone, like Christ before Pilate or Paul before Nero; but it is a question whether those men do not have to stand alone, who catch visions of the kingdom of the truth and become enamored of its wide, transforming, and eternal sway.

CHAPTER IX.

MONKS AND FRIARS.

The clergy of Wycliffe's time were divided into the regulars, the monks and the friars, who were to give their entire time to the spread of the Gospel, and the secular or national clergy, who held the offices of the Church and frequently of the State. The secular clergy were hostile to Wycliffe because of his peculiar views on Church offices and temporalities, views which would cut them off from their enormous revenues and their luxurious way of living. The regular clergy were opposed to him for two reasons, because of his attacks on their dissipation and immorality, and on their large landed estates, the fruit of which kept them in idleness and sensuality. The monasteries had ceased to be the abode of learning and piety, and had become the places, as is shown by the numerous prints we have of the lives of the monks, for revelry and good living. Then the monks and the friars were the especial representatives of the popes, to spread his kingdom abroad, to watch his interests and to report any irregularity in doctrine or ritual. They were more or less spies upon any land in which they might dwell, and were the bitter

enemies of all new doctrines or customs that did not bear the approval of the Holy See. With his free intellectual habits Wycliffe would despise them for their absolute subjection to the pope, while their extravagance, revellings, and drunkenness, their stealing young boys to train in their order, their lack of piety or anything like devotion to religion, their assumption of superior sanctity and authority, their duplicity and robbery of the people, their mingled haughtiness and servility, disgusted the sturdy nature of the Anglo-Saxon reformer.

To really feel in touch with the monks and friars, as we ought to do, we should picture them to ourselves in their dress, manners, bearing, work, and mode of living. A good way is to stand before a picture of Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims, till we are carried back into those distant times and feel their spirit, their customs, their merry-making; the disappointment, suffering, and sin also, that lay underneath. Wycliffe's relation to the monks and friars, like everything else in his life, is largely obscure, with here and there a gleam of sunshine. At first he seems to have been attracted by them, giving them credit for sincerity in the vows they had taken. They seem also for many years not to have been hostile to Wycliffe, and some of them remained faithful to him in trouble, four learned Dominican doctors going with him to St. Paul's to defend him from heresy. But Wycliffe became better acquainted with their real spirit, their nar-

row views, their dissipation, their falsity to their mission; and they discovered his disagreement with the teachings of the Church and the authority of the pope. When he at last found out how they were robbing the people both of their means and of the Gospel, which they were particularly called to preach to them, his righteous soul was stirred like that of the prophets of Israel against the false prophets.

The monks, as an organization had been used by the popes, with a genius worthy of Napoleon, to spread the dominion of the Roman Church, the barbarians being converted and Western Europe added to the papal realms to make amends for the loss of the Eastern Empire. The monasteries had been the seat of devotion, learning, industry, and civilization, caring for the burdens of the poor and unfortunate, ministering the Word of Life to those who were tired or afraid of sin, hives of busy work and religious fervor, we regret that those little Gardens of Eden might not have been spared by Saturn's all destructive scythe. But they were abnormal, non-human, their very virtues the prolific source of deterioration and vice, they must give way to more broadly social and helpful methods. Their odor of superior sanctity had brought them immense wealth from sinners, great and small, who needed masses said for their souls. The institution of lay brethren to do the work had left them to indolence and sensuality, and they who had been the ornament be-

came the scandal of Christendom. They were hostile of course to the mendicant orders, who had been raised up to do the work they were neglecting, hostile also to the secular clergy, the very name regular implying that they were more devoted to religion and the Church than the bishops and the parish priests. Many of these monks were learned men, time for meditation giving them that clearness and depth which distinguish the master of knowledge. A few of them still led pure and self-sacrificing lives. They filled a number of chairs at the universities, were vigorously orthodox, even if immoral, and intensely devoted to the interests of their order.

The friars in coming to England to establish their order—the Franciscans in 1224, the Dominicans a few years earlier—had located at once at Oxford as the center of thought and influence. Grosseteste, afterwards the noted Bishop of Lincoln, and next to Wycliffe the best type of English sainthood, had been the friend and first lector of the Franciscans in their convent at Oxford. But in their zeal for orthodoxy, the teachings of tradition and obedience to the pope, they attempted to get control of the university so as to direct its work and to withstand the progress of the broader and more liberal learning. When Walter de Merton founded Merton College he put into the foundation the proviso that no monk or friar was ever to belong to it, but men who would do service to the world. Other colleges were founded on the same principle of opposi-

tion to the mendicants, the object being to train for England patriotic, consecrated, broadly religious, great minded statesmen. They were accused of stealing by means of lying and hypocrisy young boys who came to school, till parents would no longer send their children for fear they would be kidnapped by these pious thieves. Like Loyola later, they did not care so much for piety or natural goodness, but they wanted young men of fine appearance, good natural endowments and capacity, firmness of character and aptness for affairs.

These meddlesome friars not only interfered with the regular teachers at Oxford, but also with the work of those we would call the regular clergy, or incumbents of parishes. This interference was doubly exasperating because of the claim to superior loyalty and piety. Their preaching was rather attractive, with an off-hand freedom of speech, drawing the attention of the people, as we have noticed on the English streets a Punch and Judy show attracting the crowd for the ninety-ninth time. Their discourses consisted mostly of idle tales, sometimes the fables of Greece and Rome, more often the stories from the lives of the saints, worse than their classical models. Still if these mendicant friars had been limited to preaching it might have been well; but the pope in his favor to them granted them permission to hear confession and to grant absolution. This interfered seriously with one of the principal functions of the secular clergy, and

opened wide the gate to simony, or compounding for sins by easy money payments. They had relics and images of saints, blessed medals, indulgences from pilgrimages, and "pardons hot from Rome." Chaucer gives us a picture of the mendicant pardoner—

> "Full sweetly heard he confession,
> And pleasant was his absolution."

Instead of weeping and prayers the penitent might give money to the friars, the wealthy robber share with them his spoils, and get absolution for his crimes. Their indulgences were frequently, for a compensation, given to all in need. So vigorous were they in plying their ecclesiastical trade that the secular clergy complained bitterly of them getting money from the people for their own use, when it should have gone for the benefit of the Church.

Wycliffe seems to have first demonstrated his remarkable dialectical power in some contest between these friars and the other clergy, taking the side of the seculars or those set over parishes, against the regulars or members of the religious orders. His fearless and unsparing attacks on the mendicants are supposed to have given him his reputation at Oxford, and to have helped make him Master of Balliol College. This ability in argument, too, may well have led the authorities, when asked for some man to defend parliament for refusing the

tribute to the pope, to nominate Wycliffe for that important duty. His qualifications and disposition fitted him for controversy, quick and clear in thought, full of humor and satire, with admirable training in scholastic philosophy and logical reasoning. His sincerity, too, was one of the sources of his great knowledge and wisdom and power, while his genial temperament won him love and co-operation. Added to all this his personal character was so pure and true that his opponents never attacked it. Through all his controversies and persecutions the one insurmountable obstacle to his adversaries was his irreproachable manhood.

At first Wycliffe was greatly attracted by the poverty of the Franciscans, for it fitted in so well with his own views of temporal possessions. As we now read the life of St. Francis of Assisi and the work of the Little Brothers of the Poor, we have our hearts strangely warmed towards these lovers of men, and feel like also selling all that we have and following their simple life. He commended strongly the mendicants for their poverty and preaching to the poor, in contrast with the worldly-minded, indolent, pampered clergy. The Dominicans were founded to oppose heresy and to convert the heathen; the Franciscans to restore the Christ-like life on earth and to bring salvation to the neglected portions of the people. The monks retired from the world that they might save their own souls, the friars were to dwell in the world

that they might help others; preaching the Gospel to the poor, living on alms, rooting out error, and planting the truth in the dark places of the earth. Several of the leading members of the order kept protesting against the worldliness of the friars and demanded a return to their former vows, and lowly self-sacrificing method of living. There was thus started in the various countries of Europe a vigorous contest between the spiritual or those who emphasized evangelical poverty, and those who believed in enjoying the good things of life. It was a long, hard struggle of each side to get the other declared unorthodox, but the poor and humble disciples had to retire to their own monasteries, while the easy livers retained the favor of the pope and lived in the world and of the world.

Unfortunately when a man becomes converted and begins to live for others, he himself becomes blessed even in a material way. Worldliness, selfishness, luxury, vice then come creeping in and he closes as he began, only a little more respectable sinner. These monks and friars were accused, not only of cajoling the common people, but of besetting the bedside of the nobles and the wealthy to extort secret bequests from fear of guilt or from superstition. Graft seems to have been known then as well as in the present age. Like the rich in the time of the prophets they added field to field to the injury of the poor and the laborers, and the retarding of economic progress. They had vast estates,

costly churches, and magnificent monasteries, the gifts of wealthy penitents. They rivaled the nobles and the rich merchants in their costly manners, but paid no taxes, were not patriotic, in an evil sense cosmopolitan, against whose grasping avarice the law of mortmain was passed and repassed. There was a growing desire among the people for a fair chance with justice for all; a desire for Wycliffe to use the big stick or Hercules' club. These mendicants were found at the courts as councilors, treasurers, and negotiators of marriage; just as the Jesuits were afterwards, and with just the same hatred, too, by the regular clergy and upright laymen. They were the agents of papal extortion, employing the arts of flattery, or the terrors of the confession, to get pennies from the poor and fruitful estates from the rich. The easiest and surest way of salvation was through their ministry, as the especial favorites of the pope; for they could bind and loose, rob the people and terrify them with the pains of hell. They were really a holy terror in that superstitious age.

The landed possessions of the monks were enormous, and in spite of the severe statute against mortmain, property was still bequeathed to them. By a papal bull they were not permitted to own the property, but they might enjoy the fruits of the estates, the title to which would rest in the pope. The fruits were abundant, and, for all the monks cared, the title might rest where it would, so they

could live in luxury on the income. By this subterfuge they preserved the fact of individual poverty, while their order was enormously wealthy. Their monasteries became distinguished, not for their religious zeal or learning or charity, but for their high living and absolute disregard for the purpose of their founding or of the donations of their wealth. Of their triple vow, obedience, poverty, chastity, the first was kept as far as related to the pope, but the other two were recklessly cast to the winds. They might have long retained their hold upon the people had they kept their vows, and shown themselves the missionaries of the cross in the spirit that their founders intended. The temptations of poverty are great, but by no means so great as the temptations of wealth. Having given up their profession of poverty, or hidden it under a legal subterfuge, the religious orders quickly became debauched by their wealth and turned to robbers of the people whom they were to serve and to save.

The monasteries and mendicant orders had seemed at first true representatives of Christ, and the embodiment of Christian brotherhood, as over against the preparation for war at the castles and the noisy activity of the towns. There were still some reforming abbots who ruled their household with strictness and purity, but the corruption of the other factors in the Church had reached the monks and friars, devotion to their order took the

place of devotion to the poor, and the orders which had furnished so many saints became barnacles on the ship of progress. The abbots generally lived in great state, and rivaled the nobles in their retinues, luxury, and fighting. The mule they usually rode to indicate their humility, witnessing to their pride quite as often, was sometimes exchanged for the war horse, when their enemies got too bold, or their anger became too great, or their spirit too bellicose. These men had taken poverty as their distinguishing badge or bride, but unlike Christ when on the Mount of Temptation, they not only commanded the stones to be made bread, but fell down and worshiped the ruler of this world as more reliable than the distant promises of the Gospel. A bird in the hand, even though it had the devil's mark, was worth two in the bush, however radiant with the plumage of heaven. Somewhat strangely those orders whose one object was the reformation of society and the purification of the Church, had to be constantly reformed by successive popes, and in spite of such reformations were constantly getting deeper and deeper into laziness and luxury, if not into licentiousness. They had a take-off on the monks called the Order of Fair Ease, in which the Black Monks contributed deep drinking, the Hospitallers fine dress, the secular canons were servants of the ladies, the Grey Monks were noted for licentiousness, and the Friars Minor, whose order was

founded on poverty, would never lodge with a poor man so long as richer men were to be found. The injunction of Rousseau to do just the opposite of what men usually did, or to defy the laws of society, was fulfilled in the friars.

Wycliffe was greatly attracted also by the preaching of the mendicants as a means of spreading the Gospel among the people. Their apostolic fervor and humility and zeal in preaching, in contrast with the negligence of the secular clergy and the idleness of the monks, stimulated his imagination and profoundly influenced his later work. He saw the possibilities of such an order of preachers of the Gospel, and when he found how insincere and false to duty they were he determined to found a body of poor priests himself, who would really do the work of evangelists. Unfortunately preaching was another open door to wealth, luxury, vice, and crime. Money for confessions, absolutions, and indulgences came easy, preaching was neglected and in its stead were waste, idleness, corruption, riotous living. Rome with all her wisdom had sent special evangelists to do the work of the regular pastors and both were ruined by the false position. Another fundamental source of deterioration was the fact that in their practical theology God the Father was so far withdrawn that all idea of His Fatherhood and love was lost. In the Church of the Middle Ages the Virgin Mary and the blessed saints were the real objects of worship.

The old German robber barons passed by the Father, Jesus, and then His mother, as too holy for them, and ended by supplicating Mary Magdalene out of whom were cast seven devils, as the only one able to sympathize with them in their abominable wickedness. Christ could only be approached by favor of His court above and His representatives here. In a picture representing the Apotheosis of the Emperor Constantine, God the Father is enthroned on high, a little lower is the Son, still lower the Virgin Mary, next lower his mother Helena, then Constantine himself, and below a host of saints, all beseeching the throne of grace for pardon for the royal criminal, called the first Christian emperor.

The friars were the hands of the pope, reaching out a long distance from the seat of the Holy See, and like the arms of a polypus drawing all things into their ever unfilled maw. Their zeal soon became entirely devoted to upholding the papal power, and their own well-being, and not at all to the spread of the Kingdom of God or alleviating the condition of their fellowmen. The feeling grew upon Wycliffe, as upon other independent thinkers at Oxford that the mendicants were not only foreigners but spies, reporters of their liberal teachings to his holiness the pope. The tendency of their work is shown by the fact that, when moved by their spirit, the English hierarchy under the Lancastrian kings had stifled speculation, Oxford University for over a century ceased to be

the home of thought or intellectual activity. They were the pope's sleuth hounds; the overseers of doctrine, could smell a heretic as a dog a fox, and after the publication of his theses became Wycliffe's active and determined opponents. We might call them the pope's standing army, light-armed troops, Cossacks, free from all local restraint or authority. They were made absolutely independent of the bishops and subject to the pope alone, opening a wide gate for their assumption of superiority, and their rapid deterioration of character. They stood for the high doctrine of papal autocracy, amassed wealth like a modern corporation, and set up splendid establishments in which to live their lives of poverty and self-abnegation. As some critic has remarked, "The experience of demonstrating their faith by exposing themselves to divers temptations as often revealed the frailty of the flesh as the might of the spirit."

Wycliffe came to hate the medicants bitterly with that feeling of personal injury which comes from having a cause, which we love more than life, obstructed and vilified by its proper defenders and advocates. After he received his degree of Doctor of Theology, he gave up his forbearance toward the friars and denounced them for their weakness, venality and superstition. The four orders he claimed were new sects and arch-heretics, who impose not the law but their own rule, who spread false doctrines and preach fables but not the Word of God. He branded the higher mendicants as

hypocrites, guilty of falsehood and avarice, and the lower as beggars, able-bodied men who ought to work. Wycliffe told the people plainly that having priests and friars sing for them, hearing masses, going on pilgrimages, and giving all their goods to the religious orders, would not bring them to heaven. He declared that the first requisite for the amendment of religious life was that the friars should be converted to Jesus Christ and His Gospel. There was certainly need then to emphasize the power of the Christ life.

The council which condemned Wycliffe's theses was composed largely of monks, several from the mendicant orders. After his disagreement with the Church in doctrine they pursued him with a flood of vituperation and with pamphlets bitter and malicious. Clerical fraternal hatred is very bitter, and they as watch dogs of the papacy out-poped the pope in zeal and the persecuting spirit. Then, too, the friars were the collectors of money for Bishop Spencer's crusade against their fellow Christians of Flanders, which Wycliffe opposed as inhuman and heathenish. The expedition was a complete failure, the mendicants had to share in the opprobrium, and they hated the reformer the more intensely, as if he were responsible for their humiliation. Once when very sick at Oxford and supposed to be at the point of death, four friars from the four leading orders, with four aldermen from the town as witnesses perhaps, or just happening to call at the same time, visited Wycliffe.

They exhorted him very strongly to recant what he had said against their order and to be reconciled with the brotherhood. They evidently hoped for an easy victory over their arch-enemy. But he called for his servant to lift him up on his pillows, and holding them with his glittering eyes, with a vigor worthy of an ancestral viking, he cried: "I shall not die but live, and again declare the evil deeds of the friars."

The relation of the English people to these religious orders deserves a paragraph. The mendicants, as they were properly called, literally infested England, interfered with school discipline, with domestic relations, and instead of being peacemakers became the stirrers up of strife. The people were weary of the obtrusive sanctimony and beggarly squalor of these "Church fleas," and the university authorities were tired of their impertinent ignorance and proselytizing. Not being required to contribute regularly to the State, not being burdened with the expenses of the war or from special demands of the king, they grew up like calves of the stall; while the people around them, ground between the upper and nether millstone, the burdens of the State and the impositions of the Church, were starving or living on the poorest food. The peasantry of England, probably the most wealthy State in Europe, were living on a worse diet, it is claimed, than those of any other nation. No wonder the mendicant orders, like Dives living sumptuously every day, were hated by the people

for their rapacity and dissipation, when they ought to have been the teachers and helpers of the poor. They used the first letter of the names of the four orders to make the word CAIN, as later the first letter of the ministers' names under Charles II to make the word CABAL. This, of course, proved them the spiritual descendants of the first murderer, and the blood of men, women and children slain in Flanders again cried from the ground, against them. The demoralization of the monks and friars made them the object of vigorous attacks from Wycliffe to Luther by all men zealous for the kingdom of God. The vine that does not bear fruit is cut off by historic progress. From the disendowment under Henry VIII and from popular hatred because of their indolence and frivolity the religious orders were completely eradicated from English soil. While at Rome we went to some of the decayed monasteries on the Aventine Hill, where, living on the small return from the ancient foundation, two or three monks were dwelling, their bodies emaciated, corpse-like, the victims of the malaria coming from the uncultivated Campagna. They are the most suggestive and truest representatives of historical monasticism, stricken with the malaria of worldliness and vice, and withering away as a blighted tree. They had not heeded the warning to watch and pray, but had spent the time in feasting and merry-making, and their Lord returned to judgment.

CHAPTER X.

THE POOR PRIESTS.

The efficiency of a popular leader is shown by his grasp of the problems which beset his age, and the methods which he uses to solve them. Wycliffe saw that the crying need of his times was to restore the simplicity, earnestness and saving power of the Gospel of Christ. The means he employed were first the translation of the Bible into English, and second the organization of a band of itinerant preachers to carry that Bible and that Gospel to the people. Preaching the Word was the efficient means of extending the kingdom in apostolic times, and every widespread religious awakening since had seen a marked increase in the amount and intensity of public exposition of the Scriptures. Christ's charge to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," commends itself strongly, not only to the zeal but to the wisdom of all practical reformers. The courage of Wycliffe was impressed on all his work, but this movement to bring the Gospel to the common people stamped him as a national hero. The wisdom shown in creating the force which would really

accomplish his purpose also proclaimed him in the highest sense an ecclesiastical statesman.

The art of preaching in England had fallen very low; many parish priests had given it up altogether, while others afflicted the people with Scholastic syllogisms or saint adulations. The effect of not preaching to the people was very bad on both the higher and the lower clergy, leading not only to a lack of sympathy with the poor, but to corruption of morals, idleness and luxury. Archbishop Peckham in attempting to reform the Church services had ordered that each clerk should deliver four sermons a year to the people, certainly not a surfeit of Gospel food. The friars amused and disgusted the people with old wives' fables, stories from Grecian mythology or tales from so-called ecclesiastical history. These, with the Bible pictures on the walls of the churches, formed the real source of the people's ideas of God and salvation. Wycliffe determined to show the people a better way, to give them a better means of instruction, and to call them to a renunciation of sin and to a life of faith and holiness. He believed that England's greatest need was to have the Bible plainly preached to the people, with sincerity of heart, but without gloss or subtle interpretation. He insisted repeatedly on the importance of the sermon and the less value of ceremonies, particularly in arousing men to a sense of their personal relation to God. All evangelical reformers from Isaiah to

General Booth have laid stress on preaching as the special instrument for the conversion of men, and for the reformation of life and manners. Absolution, masses, pardons, penances, all granted for a consideration, militated directly against personal responsibility which Wycliffe wished to emphasize.

Wycliffe was not only an intelligent, devoted Doctor of Theology, but a clear-sighted handler of men, a wise leader and guide of a popular movement. The ideal that most largely influenced him in his desire to give the Gospel to the people was the sending out of the seventy disciples by Jesus, but later examples were close at hand. The Archbishop of Canterbury had been greatly affected by the ravages of the plague and the religious interest which followed, and had sent out poor men to preach in the deserted parishes. These humble missionaries may have helped Wycliffe in forming his plans for the russet priests, but the idea of preaching to the poor is common, for those who labor and are heavy laden seem to be the most favorable subjects for new missionary enterprises. The example of the friars, both at their best and at their worst, had impelled Wycliffe to use similar means for the spread of the gospel and for the salvation of the people. By the neglect of their mission and failure to preach the Gospel to the poor they had left a fertile field for the itinerant preachers, and prepared the way for their own overthrow and the real evangelization of England.

Wycliffe definitely organized the poor priests to do the work he had supposed the friars were doing, and to combat their erroneous teachings and vicious lives. For this object he needed helpers, men of courage, insight, some learning, enough to understand the Bible, as he had translated it, and his own instructions to them as preachers of the Gospel to the people. He gathered into a band a few thoughtful, learned men at Oxford, and a large number of more ignorant enthusiastic followers, who would devote themselves to the spread of his views. In establishing this fraternity of poor priests he combined the discipline of the religious orders with the freedom of action and development of personal gifts which characterized the first Methodist lay preachers.

Wycliffe was a born organizer, and followed the example of St. Dominic and St. Francis one hundred and fifty years earlier in raising up this band of men to accomplish his purpose. He wanted to awaken Christian men and women to a sense of their responsibility to God, and to use those who, as Cromwell said, "would put some conscience into their work." Like the Salvation Army leaders he would arouse his ignorant countrymen by putting the Bible into the hands of earnest, enthusiastic missionaries, and bid them preach in every place and to all classes of people. For this purpose he organized a training-school or preacher seminary, selected a number of men, poor priests as he called

them and as they delighted to be called, and instructed them in delivering the Gospel message. They considered it not only their highest duty but their chief privilege to preach the Gospel in the rural districts of England, in the churches if they could, if not at the street corners or market-places, in the cemeteries or fields, anywhere they could gather a crowd of eager listeners. After what they had heard from the friars the people were really astonished and delighted with the energetic and inspiring words of these Gospel preachers. The amused clergy laughed at their coarseness and ignorance, but the common people and some of the gentry and nobles heard them gladly. These itinerant preachers were a remarkable attempt at practical reform by which Wycliffe would supply the deficiency of the parish priests, who said mass but failed to instruct the people. They went forth relying for food and shelter on their hearers, not taking gifts as the friars did, living up to their vows of poverty, and rich only in their knowledge of God's Word and in their roll of Scripture in their mother tongue.

These itinerant preachers who wandered over England proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom may be divided into several classes and from various view-points. The good news that the gospel of Christ was being preached as in the days of old at Oxford and Lutterworth, and occasionally perhaps in London, greatly pleased and excited those

who were longing for an evangelical revival. A few sincere-hearted men, before Wycliffe sent out his itinerants, had begun to imitate the great preacher, and to declare God's law of salvation in the rural districts and smaller towns of England. These men possessed a large measure of Wycliff's spirit but furnished their own initiative, with little if any direction from him. Then there were a number of personal disciples, men whom he had selected and trained, who would do their work as their leader had planned it. Though they were called poor priests they were not all ignorant rustics, but like the early disciples of Christ, while not particularly skilled in theology or dialectics, were many of them fairly well educated men. They probably were mostly humble priests, for there was a bond of sympathy between them and the people, though they were both hostile to the higher clergy as they were at the beginning of the French Revolution. Under Wycliffe's leadership, too, young men of good family, of training and character, worthy inheritors and proclaimers of the Kingdom of Heaven, preached the glad tidings over England. Oxford, "that home and nursery of fervent enthusiasms," as it is called, furnished many of these simple preachers, who with the Gospel message and the Gospel spirit took their red robes and sermon briefs, and left culture and genial companionship to preach to the poor, and to accept apostolic poverty. Whether simple priests, or poor

preachers, or Oxford graduates, they all had the special training for their work, which association with a man of Wycliffe's tremendous spiritual force and listening to his simple, wholesome teaching would bring.

Then there were many who were really unlearned and ignorant men, but filled with a love of God, of justice and humanity, who in simplicity and earnestness told over and over again the story of the cross. These after Wycliffe's death, in Western England particularly, called other unordained and untrained men to the work of strengthening the brethren by means of the Word. This was the most heinous sin in the minds of the Established clergy, setting unconsecrated laics to preaching and interpreting the Holy Scriptures, an office the pope alone could worthily fulfill. Besides there were still more humble helpers, Bible readers, who had a few pages of the sacred text and read it to the people, adding a few words of comment upon it, much like Methodist class leaders or local preachers. No doubt some of these men did not and could not have Wycliffe's clearness of vision or sincerity of purpose or admirable self-restraint. The elevation of their new position and the excitement of preaching turned their heads and loosened their tongues, so that their own confused ideas became their gospel and their own moral inclinations the standard of Christian life. Spiritual fervor united with good common sense is rare among

reformers, and the wicked old world will have to keep up its snail pace till its latter-day prophets get, like Paul and Wycliffe and Wesley, broadly sensible. Then certain fellows of the baser sort made a hodge-podge of Wycliffe's principles, interpreting his doctrine of dominion to mean the spoliation of the clergy, and then rebellion against and murder of their lay oppressors, resistance to taxation and the authorities of the State, and finally the founding of a communistic brotherhood. Getting erroneous reports of what the reformer was teaching or misconstruing them to suit their purpose, any man who felt called upon to denounce the sins of the times, and they were plenty and flagrant enough, made the Oxford Don authority for his message of revolutionary socialism.

Wycliffe wisely chose his preachers mostly from among the poor, for they were better able to understand the needs, the feelings, the aspirations, and the natural course of development among the common people. The spiritual quickening of a nation manifests itself not only in the gospel being preached to the poor, but in men chosen from the people being sent with the message. There is also among people in general a deeply running stream of desire for righteousness, for fair dealing, for removal of limitations and burdens, which those devoted to their own selfish interests can not see or understand. Two things seems to be necessary for the evangelical, effective preaching of the Gos-

pel, freedom from ecclesiastical domination and active work among the people. These poor priests, drawn from the people, speaking to the people, supported by the people, were admirably adapted to the work of impressing the Gospel message on the poor and lowly. They were brave, earnest, sincere, loving, helpful, placing themselves at once in sympathy with their audience; the true leaders of the people in their thought and moral standards. They were far more faithful followers of the Lord than were the prelates, and the people again answered to the Christ spirit which was in their midst. They used plainness of speech, homely phrases, sharp criticisms, telling comparisons between the lives of the clergy and the simplicity of the Gospel. As to Wesley's itinerants, so to these men, righteousness was an experience, a life, and as such they proclaimed it from transformed lives to the people. Familiarity with holy things had led to indifference among the regular clergy, but these new converts were filled with a holy fervor, a consuming zeal to preach the glad tidings to their fellow-men. Learned and unlearned, they preached the Gospel in Wycliffe's spirit and with Wycliffe's success.

The itinerants made their appeal to the Scriptures, and everything was tested by God's law. Their language was simple, direct, intelligible; they had no shares in masses or pardons or indulgences to sell. They denounced vigorously the prevailing

sins of the times, and being in earnest they spoke as they felt, from heart to heart. Clad in long garments of undressed wool, bare-foot and staff in hand, like pilgrims or the seventy sent out by Jesus, they wandered from town to town preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. Not depending on fables and legends, on charms of verse or display of rhetoric, their sermons were plain and severely practical, directed not to the imagination but to the common sense and the moral judgment. They made use of keen satire against the English prelates, the monks and the whole papal system. Their inferences were boldly drawn, with illustrations from daily life and no authority but the Word of God. The Bible was the great handbook of the itinerants, and they freely used its teaching, its language and its spirit. Some of the poor preachers had parts of the Gospels transcribed by their own hand, some Wycliffe's sermons and notes, some only a good memory, and, above all, love for the people. They shocked conventional orthodoxy in many ways, chiefly by declaring that the real heresy was to claim that the Gospel was not sufficient for the salvation of men and women. They maintained that Christ's law was sufficient for Christ's Church, and the people do not need any priest's or man-made law, but to get back to the Gospel. These poor priests of Wycliffe were in a peculiar position, condemning the friars for offering salvation on too easy terms, and themselves

condemned by the English clergy for opening too wide the doors of the kingdom. To the Pharisees Jesus also appeared to offer salvation too freely to the common people, for it is hard for the elect to believe that the whole world as they know it has been redeemed.

Wycliffe began to preach sermons in English as early as 1361. He finally gave up his dependence on didactics and dialectics, the work of the scholar and the schoolman, to preach the truth simply and freely to students and disciples and the people. He maintained assistants in his parishes, and trained them to teach and to preach and to translate the Bible, and to explain and illustrate it by precept and example. In one of his sketches for his itinerants he says: "In this gospel of the day priests have occasion to speak of the false pride of the rich and the luxurious living of great men of the world, and of the long-enduring pains of hell and the blessedness of heaven, and so may extend the sermon as circumstances may require." When Wycliffe determined to provide teachers for the people from among the people, independent of the Church or its officers he excited the vigorous opposition of the English prelates. They very naturally forbade the preaching of the Gospel by the poor priests, for it was undermining the whole superstructure on which their authority and living depended. The archbishop spoke of Wycliffe's men as: "Certain unauthorized itinerant preachers, se-

rious not only in character, but also in public and private life who set forth erroneous and heretical assertions in public squares and other profane places." Such words might have been written four hundred years later, particularly: "This they do under the guise of holiness, but without any episcopal or papal authorization." The Church over Europe had always looked with disfavor on the introduction of lay preachers, as lowering the standard of the clerical order, and no doubt also as interfering with their peculiar privileges. The Waldenses, or Poor Men of Lyons, had claimed that every good man, clerical or lay, was God's priest and every bad man, though ordained, was man's priest. Their founder, Peter Waldo, had the four Gospels translated, and held that laymen had a right to read them to the people. He thus, like Wycliffe, came into conflict with the Church, for the lay preachers of both exposed the ignorance and immorality of the clergy. Some cloister poet has given us the clerical view of the poor priest:

> "All stipend they forbid to give,
> And tithes whereon poor curates live,
> From sinful lords their dues they take,
> Bid serfs their services forsake."

Nowhere is true manhood better shown than in a great statesman's treatment of the people as witnesses Richelieu's organization of the French government without any regard to the popular wel-

fare, in contrast with Abraham Lincoln's constant concern for the people of the United States. No man has regarded the condition of the people more intelligently, or set about more persistently and wisely to benefit them, than John Wycliffe, not only the hero of the English Reformation, but one of the noblest friends of the poor that ever lived. From mingling with them in his native village he seems to have gotten into sympathy with them, and during his college course he was planning how he might in some way aid them. As rector of Fillingham and then of Luggershall he came in close touch with the people, visited and comforted them, and his greatest longing was to do something which should be for their permanent good. His opposition to the monks and friars was because they neglected the ministry to the poor, and were hirelings and not shepherds. His hostility to the pope and hierarchy was largely because the papal exactions were forced alms levied on the parochial clergy to be paid in ready money, and thus bore heavily on the parishioners. He saw plainly that if the people were going to be permanently benefited, they must have the Gospel preached to them as Jesus preached it at the Sea of Galilee. Like his great master, as Wycliffe lost prestige with those in high places, he gained in influence with the common people. He taught his followers that they must preach from heart to heart, must flash the light into the soul of the hearer, and bend his will

into obedience to the truth. The great curse of the people was ignorance and superstition, a blind worship of they scarcely knew what, while their appointed preachers were only making their understanding more and more dark. The way of salvation for them lay through intellectual and spiritual light, to quicken them by the Holy Scriptures into somewhat of the sublime purpose of Jesus Christ, and to give them some understanding of what life means and how it should be lived.

Wycliffe determined definitely to take the people for his friends and constituency, like Horace Mann in his great work for the public school, and to plant his teachings in their hearts; wisely foreseeing that not the nobles or the priests, but the English people would control the destinies of the country. He was the first of the great social reformers with clearness of vision and largeness of purpose to transform the character of civilization or historical development. He had a passion for men, for ordinary men, for they had a great deal of vigorous, manly character, honest, with homely virtues, devoted to righteousness. This love for the common people gave him great insight into their needs and great capacity for providing means for their elevation and enlightenment. Then, too, like all great-hearted men, he had a longing for human brotherhood, and failing to find it among those of his own class, either the learned or the clergy or the nobles, he appealed to the people, and set

about preparing them to sympathize with him and his work. It was his aim as it was that of Joseph Chamberlain, to better the condition of the common man, "that the world, if it were the paradise of the rich, should at least cease to be the purgatory of the poor." There can be no greater work than to tear aside the dark clouds that gather over the skies of the poor or the outcast, and show them a star of hope yet shining through the rift, and in some way to give them inspiration to strive again for noble and exalted manhood. As we read the records of those times we feel that there was a great gulf fixed between the rich and the poor, between the higher nobility and clergy and the lower, and between all these and the poor serfs who were confined to the soil. To the peasants thus sunken in poverty and despair came as in the days of old the glad tidings, the good news of the kingdom of God, which meant freedom first from sin and guilt, but second also freedom from the yoke of bondage, and peace and brotherhood among men. There is a profound significance in the fact that one of the signs of the Kingdom of Heaven is that the poor have the Gospel preached to them, for the Kingdom of Heaven on earth like the English constitution must rest on the solid basis of the people's rights and enlightenment.

From his student life on Wycliffe had set a high value on the Holy Scriptures and was a master of the Vulgate, the only edition he had. He laid

great stress on teaching the Word, for he had strong faith in the power of the Bible to enlighten and strengthen the people. The mission of the priests was to preach to the people, to awaken the conscience of their ignorant countrymen by direct appeal to God's law. He commended the preaching friars and lamented the laziness of the secular clergy. They claimed that there was more virtue in prayer and contemplation than in preaching, as lazy people do now. Wycliffe maintained that true preaching was better than praying by the monks in Latin, that secluded meditation was selfish, beatific perhaps, but would not save others. "God's will," he says, "is plainly revealed in the two Testaments, which a Christian man, well understanding, may thence gather sufficient knowledge during his pilgrimage here on earth." As a good example of the fruitfulness of the simple Gospel and a pure life is the fact that from St. Bernard's Abbey of Clairvaux were taken one pope, six cardinals and thirty bishops. This knowledge of and reverence for the Bible enriched Wycliffe's own character. Thorpe, one of the itinerants, speaks of him as "the most virtuous and most godly wise man I ever heard." The effect on such men of the clergy persecuting him was to make them break entirely with the officials of the Church, and to preach to the people with or without their authorization. The higher clergy succeeded in keeping back the reformation for nearly two hundred years but the spirit

of the English people was with Wycliffe and his preachers; and the time must come when the stream flowing deep and strong beneath the ground would come to the surface and all men would accept it as the way of liberty and manhood.

CHAPTER XI.

LATER VIEWS.

It was a great day for England and the world when Wycliffe seriously turned to the study of theology. It means an epoch in race advancement when any able and determined man begins to investigate and reflect upon the great questions which underlie human progress and destiny. Wycliffe's eyes had been opened and his faculties awakened from early boyhood, his young soul with a boy's sense of injustice revolting at the hard and crushing life of the poor, and the neglect and oppression of the rich. His life at Oxford revealed not only the low state of morals among the leaders of society, but the low ideals and ambitions, the supreme worldliness and selfishness that governed the shepherds of souls. His connection with and defense of the parliament and king impressed him still more strongly with the need of saving the higher clergy, from themselves and to the people, by reducing their incomes and extravagance, their worldly offices and cares, and restoring them to their proper functions as spiritual guides. His few weeks at Bruges revealed the heartlessness and chicanery of the whole papal régime, and turned

him back to Christ and the Gospel as the only Savior for his people.

When Wycliffe received the doctor's degree he was given the full right to lecture on theology or the Scriptures. From that time probably we can date his first conscious and rapidly developing opposition to traditional beliefs, and still more to current practices of the Church. Careful study of the teachings of the Church in comparison with the Bible revealed their error, and being too honest and too intelligent to be blindly led he raised his voice in moral protest. We have no need to suspect that personal disappointment over the loss of a bishopric or a wardenship led Wycliffe to oppose the pope. Reasons abundant for such opposition were found in the state of the Church and in his own high ideals. The removal of the pope to Avignon, bringing the seat of corruption nearer, without the glamour of the Eternal City, and subjecting the Holy See to French political interests, like in the Eastern tale uncovered the face of the veiled prophet and showed his natural ugliness. A fallen or broken god, as the Philistine Dagon, becomes an object of suspicion and hatred, and Wycliffe's spirit revolted from the selfish, vicious, bigoted creature that was styled the head of the Church.

The Great Schism in the Western Church was for Wycliffe far more than the straw that broke the camel's back. It marked the turning-point in his career, changing him from a critic to a vigorous

opponent of the papacy. Two rival popes anathematizing each other and ordering the murder of men, women and children, and the wholesale destruction of property in their wild fury, made spiritual obedience no longer possible. The shortcomings and even the crimes of the papacy, which might otherwise have remained in shadow, now came into full light, and earnest men everywhere were astounded at the revelation. Only the curses heaped upon the pagan Roman Empire in the Book of Revelation were adequate to express men's indignation against its Church counterpart, with its seat also at Rome, the immemorial fountain of corruption. The Great Schism, as Wycliffe said, was the consequence of the moral apostasy of the papal curia from the teachings, the poverty, and the purity of Christ. Its influence gave to his work a higher aim and a wider humanitarian purpose. Despairing of the Church and its officials he turned definitely to the work of saving men.

Wycliffe shows how rapidly an active mind, once freed from the yoke of ancient theology, will break loose from established opinions. He had condemned the abuses and corruptions of the Church, he now attacked its fundamental doctrines. These had remained unassailed for centuries, which shows Wycliffe's boldness and originality in challenging the positions of the papacy. He wanted to purify the doctrine of the Church, free it from all later additions, and bring it back to primitive simplicity.

Wycliffe's views and convictions grew, for he was a progressive man, not all at once a full-fledged reformer, but obedient to the light as it was revealed. He says, "At last the Lord by the power of His grace opened my mind that I should understand the Scriptures." There is no virtue in set prayers, he claimed, but in personal holiness. Confession of sin to a priest is not necessary for a contrite man. He opposed the worship of the Virgin Mary, the invocation of saints, the veneration of relics, the doctrine of purgatory, and denied the infallibility of the Roman Church in matters of faith. "There is scarcely any doctrine now set forth," says a late critic; "by the Church of England, which was not insisted upon by him; scarcely any error against which the Church of England practically protests which Wycliffe does not treat in a manner which anticipates and justifies our modern objections." His positive doctrines are, personal responsibility to God, the absolute authority of the Scriptures, and salvation by faith. His negative teaching is, the denial of the necessity of priestly mediation, and of all the superstitions which cluster around it, especially that of a miraculous change effected in the elements by consecration at the Lord's Supper.

The development of Wycliffe's views in regard to Transubstantiation well illustrates his changing attitude towards the teachings and authority of the Roman Church. The priestly claim to superiority

over the laity had its center and source in the miracle of the mass. Wycliffe carefully examined this doctrine in the light of Scripture and of reason, and decided that the elevation and worship of the host is idolatry. He had at first opposed the statement that at the prayer of the priest the bread and wine were changed into the literal body and blood of Christ because of its philosophical absurdity; but when he saw the effects of this superstition on the lives of both priests and people, he protested against it as a practical reformer. This was the especial mark of Wycliffe's superiority over other Schoolmen, that he not only saw principles as clearly as they, but applied them to the lives of the worshipers. Like Clement of Alexandria, or Zwingle or Wesley, Wycliffe believed the body and blood of Christ were in the sacrament spiritually and efficiently, but not bodily and materially. The General Council in 1215 A. D. had first declared the bread and wine of the sacrament to be changed, miraculously transubstantiated, into the body and blood of Christ. The power of the priests over the people, the very separation of the clergy from the laity, was based on the power to work a daily miracle at the sacrifice of the mass. If this popular belief in miracles was undermined the Church would lose its power, and spiritual authority be unequal to keeping the multitude in subjection. To live the Christ life has in all ages been hard, performance of ceremonies has been

easy, and belief in miracles has formed a useful substitute for a changed life.

In the spring of 1381 Wycliffe issued his formal denial of the doctrine of Transubstantiation, a declaration which struck directly at the superstitious power of the priesthood. He thus began the long and persistent revolt against ecclesiastical domination of thought and will, that led one hundred and fifty years later to the establishment of freedom by severing the mass of Teutonic peoples from the Catholic Church. The supremacy of the mediæval Church rested upon the doctrine of transubstantiation, and by the exclusive right to perform the miracle of the mass the lowest priests were raised far above princes. Without this daily miracle of turning the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, the authority and standing of the priest would be greatly lessened; in fact, must then depend on his nobility and uprightness of character and spirituality. Wycliffe denied that there was any material change in the elements at consecration, and yet he believed in the real presence of the body and blood of Christ. "The body of Christ," he said, "is given, taken and eaten in the Lord's Supper only after a heavenly and spiritual manner." He perhaps held some such view as Luther in Consubstantiation, but sometimes he seems to hold that it was a sign or remembrance of the Saviour's passion.

Wycliffe published his denial of transubstan-

tiation in the school at Oxford in the form of twelve short theses, and in academic or knightly fashion declared himself ready to defend them. Nothing so daring had been done in the entire history of the mediæval Church. It was not so spectacular perhaps, or historically so important, as Luther posting his ninety-five theses on the church door at Wittenberg, but had the king and people of England been ready for freedom, Wycliffe's theses would have been the distinct beginning of the Teutonic reformation. The substance of the twelve theses is well summed up in the charges against the doughty reformer:

I. "That in the sacrament of the altar the substance of material bread and wine do remain the same after consecration that they were before.

II. "That in that venerable sacrament the body and blood of Christ are not essentially, nor substantially, nor even bodily, but figuratively or tropically; so that Christ is not there truly or verily in His own proper bodily person."

Wycliffe's first thesis states the whole point in dispute: "The consecrated host which we see on the altar is neither Christ nor any part of Him, but the efficacious sign of Him." He protested vigorously against the priest's making the body of Christ in the mass, and appealed to the early Church, the Catholic fathers, the Scriptures and reason. The Church tried to establish the supernatural belief in mysticism, but Wycliffe emphasized the value of common sense and experience.

In this denial of the Church's cardinal doctrine Wycliffe like Luther at Worms stood entirely alone. Like the German Reformer, too, his appeal was to the Bible and to justification by faith as over against miracles by the priest or salvation by the Church. A council was hastily summoned by the chancellor of Oxford University, composed largely of members of the mendicant orders, and they promptly decided to forbid the teaching of Wycliffe's views. He boldly challenged the chancellor or any of his officers to refute his statements, but no one, doctor or master, would undertake the task. Though already stricken with disease his armor was still on and his falchion ready. In a vigorous, manly paper he petitioned the king and parliament that he might be allowed to prove his doctrines, and urged that all religious vows might be suppressed, and the tithes given for the maintenance of the poor, that the clergy might be maintained by the free gifts of their flock, that the statutes of Provisors and Præmunire might be enforced against the papacy, that Churchmen might be declared incapable of holding secular office, and that imprisonment for excommunication might cease. He was equally plain spoken as to saint worship, monastic vows, confession, absolution and indulgences. Christ is the only Mediator between God and man, not the pope, the clergy or the saints. The pope was not a true law-giver, for he claimed that he could dispense with the law, which God or

nature could not do. The popes claimed the power to lay down the law of good and evil, and then free men from doing good, and indulge them in doing evil. Wycliffe was not allowed to appear before parliament, but the appeal helped spread his views over England.

Wycliffe was worried over transubstantiation, examined it, weighed it, rejected it and lost a great part of his followers. They would not climb the heights with their leader till they looked on God, as Dante did, in the glory of absolute righteousness. The aristocratic party had supported him as a reformer of the discipline and political relations of the Church, but they would not support him in protesting against its cardinal beliefs. In declaring against the worship of the mass as idolatry, he united against him king, lords, commons and the exasperated hierarchy. John of Gaunt came up to Oxford, heard the case, and ordered Wycliffe to be silent. He had defended him in his protests against the wealth of the clergy, he would not protect him in his attacks on the doctrines of the Church. Wycliffe met the condemnation by an open avowal of his teaching, a confession that closed with the sublime statement: "I believe that in the end truth will conquer." Rejected by the wealthy and learned classes he turned to the people, the first appeal ever made to England at large. He flung aside the stately, syllogistic Latin and involved argument, and issued tract after tract in the

popular tongue. Once freed from the trammels of unquestioning belief his mind moved fast in its career of skepticism and protest. He decried the worship of images, pardons, pilgrimages, priestly absolutions, the supremacy of the pope, all the sources of the Church's corruption. He appealed to the Bible as the one ground of faith, and the right of every instructed to man to study it for himself, by which the foundation of the old dogmatism was threatened with ruin.

Archbishop Courtenay upon receiving the pallium from Rome at once proceeded against Wycliffe. He summoned a council of learned ecclesiastics to meet at the Dominican Monastery, Blackfriars, London. Of the sixty notables present there were ten bishops, sixteen doctors of laws, thirty doctors of theology, and four bachelors of laws. They were all men of strict Roman orthodoxy, vigorous opponents of Wycliffe and his teachings. It is called the Earthquake Synod, because on the third day of the session the city was violently shaken by an earthquake. Many of the ecclesiastics feared the evil omen, but Courtenay proclaimed it an emblem of the purification of the kingdom from false doctrine. The earth had gotten rid of its noxious vapors, they should cast out the wicked from their community and thus put an end to the convulsions of the Church. To Wycliffe it was a sign of God's displeasure with error and persecution. He said, "Nature cried out against

the wrong, as at the passion of the Son of God." Of twenty-four propositions taken from Wycliffe's teachings and the words of his itinerants, they condemned ten as heretical and fourteen as erroneous. A few of them will show their import:

I. That the substance of the material bread and wine remains after consecration in the sacrament of the altar.

IV. That if a bishop or priest be in mortal sin he does not ordain, consecrate or baptize.

V. That if a man be truly contrite all exterior confession is useless and superfluous to him.

X. That it is contrary to the Holy Scriptures that ecclesiastical men should have temporal possessions.

From a paradoxical statement of Wycliffe in regard to the Divine permission of evil, illustrated by Christ's submitting to be tempted by Satan, they derived:

VII. That God ought to obey the devil.

About the same time they had an imposing procession through the streets of London of indignant priests and devout laymen, marching barefoot, chanting penitential Psalms, because of the great heretic's attack on the mass. It showed that the ecclesiastics of those days could put up a gigantic bluff to hoodwink the people, and that they were tremendously afraid of the results of Wycliffe's teaching.

As the result of the Earthquake Synod a man-

date was sent to Oxford by the archbishop, requiring the prohibition of Wycliffe's doctrines and the suppression of his followers. The authorities at first refused to obey the decree and chose one of the leading disciples of Wycliffe to preach before the university. But Courtenay summoned the chancellor to London and compelled him to submit, and some of the reformers to recant. He succeeded in getting an act to repress the followers of Wycliffe through the House of Lords and assented to by the king, but the House of Commons at their next session demanded its repeal. But the archbishop, being like Saul of Tarsus exceedingly mad against those of the new faith, obtained from the king permission to arrest the heretics and put them into the ecclesiastical prisons, where we may be sure they would be roughly dealt with. But they must smite the shepherd as well as scatter the flock. In 1383 Wycliffe was summoned before the convocation at Oxford to answer the charges against him. Though weak he aroused himself to speak with energy and power on behalf of his views. The authorities did not refute or condemn him, but simply banished him from the university. It was an awful blow to the aged saint to be thrust out of the place which for so many years had been his intellectual and social and spiritual home. It was with weary feet and a burdened heart, as well as with grim determination to finish his work that he turned his feet toward Lutterworth. The condem-

nation of his teachings and the persecution of his followers was as severe a blow, however, to the school itself, of which he had been the chief light for forty years. Under the restrictive régime there were only one-fifth as many students at Oxford as in the days of the great teacher and preacher, when thought was free and intellectual activity a fact. Oxford has recently made some amends for that former barbarity by publishing a fine edition of his two translations of the Bible, the most appropriate monument they could rear to the memory of the greatest of their Schoolmen.

As there was no law yet for burning heretics in England his opponents tried to get Wycliffe to take that journey to the Eternal City from which reformers did not return. Pope Urban VI summoned him to Rome to answer the charge of heresy, but he half jocularly excused himself on account of his age and infirmities. Unfortunately for the persecutors there was no power in England strong enough to enforce the papal bull against the man who had made himself the champion of national rights against all foreign aggression. Wycliffe was greatly beloved at Oxford, for he was strong in every respect, as a man, as a teacher, a preacher, a lecturer, a dialectician. In London and in the kingdom men of all classes, peasants, commons, lords, king, looked to him for strength. He was the ready and effective champion of the people against the monks, the friars, the popes, the ob-

scurantists; of the nation against the papacy, of the new truth against the bishops, the orders and the papal bulls.

After leaving Oxford Wycliffe devoted his time to the parish of Lutterworth, and in his fidelity to his duties reminds us of Cardinal Wolsey after his fall in his work at York. It is a good mark of a great man that he finds his solace for loss of power or influence in helping and ministering to the poor. Wycliffe followed his Master in preaching the gospel to the people, both by word of mouth and much more largely by tract, homily, published sermon and the English Bible. Instead of spending his time in vain regrets he gathered about him a band of disciples and set to work vigorously to complete the translation of the Old and New Testaments, and to equip his poor priests for their work. Through his practical wisdom and moral courage he wrung out of defeat and banishment from Oxford a still larger victory for his Master's cause. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength and in the lower lights, the humbler duties, the true greatness of Wycliffe appeared.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PEASANTS.

No LIFE of Wycliffe would be complete without a description of the peasants and their struggle for recognition in the economic state. It has always been the tendency of the so-called upper classes to place the burden of their support upon the common people in return for their oversight and protection. Were the ideal of this feudal relation somewhat fully and sympathetically carried out, this arrangement might be greatly for the advantage of both orders, at least until new economic conditions forced a new and better relationship. Unfortunately the higher classes forget their feudal duties, do not aid the peasantry to improve their methods and their fruits, but place heavier burdens upon them, both from lack of sympathy and from an emulous desire for more luxurious living. The kindly relations that should exist between a lord and his tenants are entirely broken with the rapid increase of wealth and luxury, for the wise fools are always so busy building greater barns that they forget and neglect their duties to society. The poor in all countries, the hill men in Attica, the Plebeians in Rome, the Jacquerie in France, the peasants

in Russia, have each had to rise to the higher sphere through revolt against the intolerable conditions placed upon them. The English farm laborer, Hodge as he is called, is usually a long suffering animal, but sometimes the burden becomes too great for even the patient ass. In 1381 occurred the most serious popular outbreak England has ever known, a lesson and a warning to all races of the aspirations, the passions, the limits of endurance of the working classes.

The rise of the peasant class depended on two causes, the exchange of service in kind for money payments by which he became a free laborer, and use in war by which he learned his value as a man. The prosperous times during the early part of Edward III's reign had led the landlords to accept money instead of work, and to pay money for services, first to the herdsmen because of their greater independence, and gradually to other laborers. Then, too, as money came into general use, and the upper classes were constantly wanting it for their many necessities the peasants bought their freedom and could not be put back into servitude. A penny a day was paid for hay-making, twopence a day for reaping; but the money value of service kept increasing, wages rose and could not be put down again. The battle of Crecy, too, won by the English yeoman brought a revolution in military service, and prepared the English common man to take part in his country's government.

The world is becoming more and more interested in this common man. The nobly born, the rich and the powerful, have occupied the front of the stage for centuries. Humanity is at last seeing itself in the man who does the ordinary work of life, and is demanding more consideration for his welfare. The greater saints are all right, the nobler martyrs whose heroism has elevated mankind, but there is a peculiar significance in All Saints' Day, when the unnoted heroes of the faith are remembered in mass.

The manorial system with its sharp line of demarcation between land owner and tenant or serf was the product of the feudal system, and may for a time have prevented anarchy and social war. But the peasants had for three centuries been contending against the Norman exactions and evictions, against Rienzi's "petty tyrants, feudal despots," jealous of their rights, with pride of caste and clinging to their privileges. It was the fashion for the rich to be lavish, to keep open house, to bestow favors freely, for wealth came to the nobles without work or effort, and under the feudal régime they did not pay for the goods or services that the producing classes were obliged to contribute. The laborers, on the other hand, were unskilled, their wants few, their tastes simple, the houses mere huts, with scanty furnishings, their food was poor and from the farm, their clothing coarse and lasting, almost everlasting, with no education or social re-

finement. The scant food, the bitter cold, the filthy huts, the dress, manners and language, too, made a barrier which was impassable between the classes. The peasant longed for right rule, for plain and simple justice, for every man a fair chance, which is still the cry of reform. They saw the vast accumulations of wealth and lands in the hands of the few, they contrasted the idleness and luxury of the rich with their own poverty and degradation, and their Anglo-Saxon manhood revolted, and we are glad that it did.

The Canterbury Tales and the Complaint of Piers the Plowman, an allegorical poem, illustrating and emphasizing practical Christianity or the love of our neighbor, show the gulf widening between the classes. But Chaucer's world of superstition and merry-making seemed to Langland the world of wrong and ungodliness. His heart burning from actual experience, he cries out against the narrowness and monotony of life to the poor, the hunger and the toil, the coarse revelry and despair, the deep under-tone of sadness and misery. In quite the modern spirit he proclaimed that love is the greatest of all, that Jesus Christ came to teach men how to live, that a religious life was better than a host of indulgences, and that God grants him the pardon the priests deny. In his dream he sees corruption brought to trial, popular sins and clerical vices are soundly lashed, and the world finally repents at the teaching of reason. Piers the

Plowman was read and appreciated by all the common folks, showing that the social rift was rapidly widening amidst distress and misery, and that revolution, religious and economic, was at the door. A long series of disasters attributed to the ruling class had made the people forget the glory of Crecy and Poictiers, and added bitterness and general suffering and discontent.

The Hundred Years' War had made of France a great store house to be plundered, and there was scarcely an English home of the better class that did not have several articles of furniture or ornament stolen from across the channel. This vitiated their simple tastes, bred a more and more expensive mode of life, and the nobles who had not succeeded in France or had wasted their spoils, or who were kept at home through the many truces, turned their plundering hand against their own tenants to keep up the luxurious customs they had learned across the sea. John of Gaunt's costly failures pressed heavily upon the English people, and council, parliament, landed proprietors and clergy tried to wring from the peasants the money to meet the losses. Taxes of various kinds were invented to place the burdens of war upon the lower classes, and by dues and fines their lords took whatever of their produce they could in any way exact. Then the Church came in for its tithes, until the peasant was indeed heavily laden, his yoke hard, his burden galling, and his shoulders

getting raw under the load. There was not only widespread suffering in France, but there was famine in England from the long continued war, from the taxes and tithes, and from the three great pestilences of Edward III's reign. As General Sherman said, "War is hell," but not only to the vanquished and plundered, but quite as much usually to the conquerors and despoilers. History teaches that war is a blunder and a crime, a necessity at times perhaps, but from the standpoint of the people and civilization, still a blunder and a crime.

War is an expensive luxury and the other side of the great wars for conquest, of the magnificent equipment and devastations and glory, is that the people must pay the bills. The lower classes always have to pay for political blunders, for bad rulers, for favorites, parasites, officials, graft, monopolies, buildings, marriages, extravagances, luxury. The building of the pyramids and temples of Egypt, the walls and hanging gardens of Babylon, cost thousands of lives of the poor. In a war the most able men are killed off, the weaker, less aggressive part of the people are left, they can scarcely support themselves, much less care for those still more helpless or pay the increased burdens of the government. Edward III's glory was, as with so many distinguished rulers, at the expense of the peasants, who had to fight his battles, till the soil, pay the taxes, support the nobility and

the Church, be the burden-bearers of the whole community and of all orders of society. The constant drain and strain had done much to dry up the industries of the people and the heavy taxes had taken all their means. Every conceivable device for raising money was employed, the king repudiated his promises not to resort to arbitrary taxation, sold monopolies to merchants for larger customs, and wrested contributions from the clergy by agreement with the bishops and the pope.

There was a smoldering mass of discontent all over England which needed but a spark to burst into a flame, and that was furnished when parliament, in 1377, imposed a novel tax upon the people, a poll tax of four pence a head. In 1380 this tax was tripled, and public feeling was fanned into a white heat. The wealth of the kingdom was said to be in the hands of the laborers, and the landowners would take it from them just as they had tried to do from the clergy. The commissioners appointed to collect this in itself most hated of all taxes were corrupt, arbitrary, brutal; the people were disloyal and cheated the collectors as badly as the payers of personal property taxes to-day. Increased scrutiny and forced payment exasperated the people and led to open rebellion, a spontaneous uprising of the peasants without definite purpose or efficient leaders. They were like the Giant Enceladus turning in blindness and fury, a seething, irresolute mob, which had raised its huge limbs

without a brain to control, and proclaimed that forced labor and servitude in England must cease. There was no organization, no discipline, no leader like Spartacus or Napoleon, to change the mob into an army and found a commonwealth or a revolutionary empire.

To meet the increasing unrest parliament reenacted with severe penalties the Statute of Laborers, which fixed the price of labor and tied the laboring classes again to the soil. This was a favorite measure of the land-owners, being so much more easy to pass than to do justice or to try to solve the economic problem. In 1377 a statute ordered the justices to punish disobedient villeins, condemned workmen were to be considered outlaws, whom any one could kill, a swift method of turning them into lawless, wandering, plundering tramps. The statutes failed in reducing wages and in restricting laborers to definite fields of employment, but they did sow hatred between the employers and the employed, the rich and the poor. The landlords returning from France and foreign plunder endeavored to again enslave the freemen, claimed new services, or forced them to prove that they were not serfs by law. But the peasants had tasted the sweets of liberty, and they strongly resisted being compelled to work for lower wages. Fines, imprisonment, and branding would not enforce submission. Parliament increased the severity of the laws, forbade the gatherings or free

movement of laborers, called for a fugitive slave law against the serfs, and desired the judges to be sent to the shires five times a year to enforce the obnoxious statutes. Parliament was chosen entirely from the proprietary class, the landlords now struggled for the mastery of the laborers as they had for the mastery of the crown; but the king declined to accede to their wishes.

The Black Death with its terrible ravages had left a legacy of misery, lawlessness, religious fanaticism, that prepared men for the insurrection. Under its horrible guise it was really a benefactor of society, for it loosened the bands of mediæval customs, and gave room for modern ideas and relations to grow. One-half of the laborers had perished, the landlords were offering double or treble the former wages, the increasing need for workmen gave labor an advantage over capital, and made the laborer master of the situation. He claimed freedom from the old historical bondage to the soil, and from his master; and natural and economic law being on his side he won. The king in his great wisdom ordered the rate of wages to remain the same, as vain a display of regal authority as when Canute commanded the waves not to touch his royal feet. In one hundred years from that time the wages of English workmen purchased twice the amount of the necessities of life, as they now eat individually twice as much as a century ago.

The conditions of the peasants under Richard

II was deplorable. The misery of the poor seemed to be increasing, the judgment and the end of the world were supposed to be near. A fierce spirit of resistance was growing, for the serfs were determined to be free from the soil, and the renters to claim the land as their own. The misery of the poor, contrasted with the selfishness, corrruption and extravagance of the rich, was brewing revolt against the whole system of inequality and social oppression. As the burdens became heavier the limitations became greater; as the expansive force increased the repressive measures were doubled. There was no justice in the court for the serf against the lord, and one-half of the freemen of England were deprived of the benefits of Magna Charta. The peasants wanted abolition of bondage, outlawry and the game laws, free use of the woods, and free selling at markets and fairs, reduction of rent to four cents an acre, the disendowment of the Church and the lands given to the peasants, the statutes of laborers, the special police and justice courts all abolished. We have an admiration for those of the upper classes, who really aid the poor to better their conditions, and to become something nearer human beings. The history of England is honored by a few of those noble men in each century who gave up their class standing largely to bring comfort and salvation to the poor. Like Spurius Cassius, Spurius Maelius, Marcus Manlius, and the Gracchi, in Roman his-

tory, whom Cicero would have us regard as traitors to the republic, they were the real friends of the people. But the majority of the nobles robbed rather than guided their dependants. To save themselves in their new found luxury they would grind the peasants and confiscate the lands of the Church, the wealth of the clergy, the tithes of the pope. Blessed no doubt are the meek, the patient, and the English peasants with their strong faith might have endured had not the burdens been increased in proportion to their non-resistance. No doubt, too, they would have been wiser in the long run, if they would have progressed as the path opened and not hastened development too rapidly. But the kingdom of God and the right seem a long time coming, and we can scarcely blame them for their despair when the intelligent and the wealthy were increasing the burdens which ought to have grown lighter.

The titled clergy, the chief shepherds, of the flock of Christ seemed to have been the especial objects of hatred, with their enormous revenues, their flaunted wealth, their unsympathetic lives. They did not see their danger, selfishness blinding their eyes as those of the nobles before the French Revolution, though the people were living on roots and herbs, and were stung to madness by the lust of their superiors. The humble priests and friars usually suffered with the people, but the higher clergy and abbots had immense wealth, controlled

the government and made the laws, which increased the burdens of the poor. They ground their tenants for all that they could pay, and either hoarded the returns or sent them to Rome to buy favors or preferments. The "noblesse oblige" that controlled the old aristocracy more or less, had no effect on the moneyed or official upstarts, or on the abbots and bishops, more avaricious and iron-hearted than the lay lords. Neither the barons nor the higher clergy took any steps to give relief to the poor, apparently had no sympathy for them and possibly did not really know the extent of their sufferings or rebellious spirit. Lacking their natural leaders the peasants sought others, and hailed these new preachers of strange doctrines, the socialistic agitators, who promised a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

It is significant that the social question is not uppermost in Turkey or India, but in those nations where the general condition is largely advanced and in the most favored portions of those lands. Kent, for instance, was the most progressive section of England, and the laborers there were the most free and prosperous. But for that very reason they were those who felt most keenly the oppression and the attempt to again reduce them to bondage. The revolt was general in the southeast of England, the counties where the peasants were the most intelligent, and, therefore, aggressive. One important cause of the continual rise in wages

is the constant pressure of the most skilled and best paid workmen on the limitations, economic and social, that repress them. A little learning, a little money, a little freedom, makes it impossible to repress a man's disposition to rise and to be master of himself. There is no repose after men begin to improve, after their feet get up to the first rung of the ladder, for they will climb, and no power on earth can prevent them. The water swelling under some ice-locked stream in the early spring may be stopped by the gorge in some narrow place, but break the barriers it will; the longer restrained the more destructive it becomes.

The peasants gathered in thousands, killed any unhappy lawyer, clerk or justice, anybody connected with the land titles or poll-tax, whom they could reach, and destroyed the rent rolls kept at the manors. Watt Tyler, tradition said, had killed one of the commissioners for injuring his daughter, recalling to our minds and perhaps to theirs the Roman legend of Virginius. John Ball, "the Mad Priest of Kent," had been imprisoned three or four times by successive Archbishops of Canterbury, but he was now released and became the popular leader. One hundred thousand men had gathered at Blackheath just outside of London. This formidable array were armed with clubs and scythes, rusty swords and battle axes, or an old bow with one arrow. Under the banner of St. George they would again destroy the dragon that

oppressed mankind. The authorities of the city were partly in sympathy with the insurgents, and the apprentices anxious for a first-class riot, opened the gates to them. They destroyed the prison, the Savoy, John of Gaunt's palace, the Temple, the Inns of Court, the jails were opened and the rich were murdered, all in the name of liberty. The peasants jokingly stroked the beards of the knights, somewhat as the Gauls did those of the senators of Rome, and promised to be good brothers to them. To begin the reign of justice they murdered the Archbishop of Canterbury, the gentle Sudbury, whom Gaunt, by the gift of an office had made responsible for the poll tax, Sir Robert Hales the treasurer, and Richard Lyons the tax commissioner. Still the excesses of the peasants were natural from their immemorial wrongs, and crushing burdens; the more so as insurrection opens the way for fanatics, thieves, rioters, and plundering and burning, especially the property of personal enemies among the wealthy.

John Ball, the popular agitator, half fanatic, half communist, or levellist, voiced the sentiments of the peasants, became their leader, though not great or wise enough to succeed. He first preached to the English people the doctrine of natural rights and equality, and claimed that all goods should be in common; "the defiance of socialism again answering to the tyranny of property." Ball contrasted the nobles living in luxury with the starv-

ing serfs, as Patrick Henry did before the American Revolution, "The nobles have velvets and furs, wine and spices and fair bread; we have rags and straw, oatcake and water. But from our toil these men hold their estate and income;" the same arguments which are used to-day against the capitalist. Ball's principles could not be put in practice then or now, but they formed a new gospel to the peasant class and profoundly stirred those whom increasing burdens were driving to madness. This popular leader was followed by applauding crowds bearing banners with catchy devices, and making the streets resound with his ditty. It is difficult to estimate the influence of the rude couplet which Ball invented and which was sung by the poor throughout England:

> **"When Adam delved and Eve span,**
> **Who was then the gentleman?"**

This doggerel became the popular rhyme of the rural working-man, for it expressed in simplicity that eternal truth which reappeared in the "liberty, equality and fraternity" of the French Revolution and the American Declaration of Independence. Its teaching was against the whole spirit of the Middle Ages, the whole system of feudalism, of aristocratic extravagance and popular starvation. The names of Ball's lieutenants are suggestive: Jack Straw, Tom Miller, Jack Trueman, Jack Milner, Hob Carter, John Shepp, and John Nameless,

reminding us of the leaders of the crusade vanguard, Peter the Hermit and Walter the Penniless.

Richard II, the boy king, boldly rode out to Mile End, where the insurgents from the eastern counties had gathered, met the peasants in a spirit of fairness and promised them freedom and amnesty. The next day he went to Smithfield and again faced the rioters. As Watt Tyler seemed to be grasping the handle of his sword, William Walworth, Mayor of London, struck him down while talking to the king. It was the most dangerous moment of the whole insurrection, but Richard proclaimed to the mob, "I am your captain and your king, follow me." The serfs had almost a child-like loyalty to their young ruler, for like the Russian peasants to-day they thought that the king was all right but was misled by evil councilors. Their quiet dispersal at the king's promise and his generous treatment of them while guided by his mother is the one spot of light on the lurid background. He issued a charter granting abolition of bondage, but, influenced by the land-owners, he later revoked it and joined them in taking a terrible vengeance on the serfs for their well-nigh successful rebellion. Many of the poor fugitives were afterwards killed with the king's pardon in their hands, a shameless betrayal of the royal word, the first step that caused his own deposition and death. The peasants died for the cause of freedom

and won, the king lied for the cause of slavery and lost.

When the peasants had dispersed, the nobles, like the band of oppressors they were, took courage and attacked and killed them, for they were helpless. The reaction was strong and bitter, the vengeance was terrible, a pitiless brutality of the master against the serf, the curse of class hatred. The Bishop of Norwich, the fighting parson of that day, slew his helpless people without mercy, for in rebelling against established order, were they not guilty of treason, impiety, sacrilege? The barbarity of the long oppressed peasants was shocking, but the vengeance of the terrified landlords was past all decency. "Of all revolutions the worst is a reaction." After the nobles had slaughtered to their heart's content, Tresillian, the new Chief Justice, an earlier Lord Jeffries, was sent to the eastern counties and visited upon the outcasts the pitiless tyranny of the law. Seven thousand men were killed with the sword or the rope, thirty being hanged on one gallows. The king's council suggested a compromise and enfranchisement, but the land-owners in parliament were hard and bitter, the serfs were their goods and chattels and could not be taken away from them, and they would never consent to their manumission. The renewed statutes of laborers forbade any child of a working man to be apprenticed in a town, no bondsman could place his children in school, lest they should get

into the Church or priesthood and thus be free from bondage. The executions were stopped at the marriage of the king, after John Ball was caught and executed in the royal presence, but like John Brown "his soul went marching on."

The results of the Peasants' Rebellion are difficult to determine. Upon this as upon so many subjects the authorities seem to take pleasure in disagreeing. As in many of the strikes in the nineteenth century, the workmen appeared to fail and the old conditions to be restored, while in fact the revolt rather hastened than retarded economic freedom. In spite of repression and slaughter and re-enslavement, and stricter laws, the stars in their courses were fighting for the peasants, and industrial development brought them independence. In spite of land-owners in parliament, bellicose bishops and avaricious abbots, serfage in England was doomed. People once freed could not be put back under the yoke of bondage. To make men of spirit work as serfs became more and more impossible. Human slavery was no longer a paying institution, and no laws could preserve it. As the knights and burghers advanced in wealth and political power, the common people improved and became men and citizens. John of Gaunt had for some time been freeing the serfs on his lands, and by a somewhat remarkable double somersault he now took the place of the king as the friend of the people. During the next century villeinage died out rapidly, small free-

holders increased, and in twenty years more became the basis of the electoral system. Higher wages, more prosperous times, the extension of commerce and industry and the privilege granted a runaway, that if he dwelt in a town a year and a day he should be free, greatly aided the peasants in obtaining their industrial liberty.

While the poor and oppressed were breaking out in a fierce revolt against the ruling class, Wycliffe was quietly carrying on his work at Oxford and Lutterworth. But his clerical opponents would not miss so good an opportunity to incriminate their enemy. To incite the landholding aristocracy against him, they declared that his teachings were subversive of the rights of property, and that he and his itinerants were responsible for the rebellion. No doubt Wycliffe's political sympathies were with the common people, the oppressed laborers and serfs of England. He protested vigorously against the abuses and restrictions, the inequality of the law, the venality of the lawyers, the subversion of justice, the extortions and the fraudulent enforcement of serfdom and labor. His doctrine of lordship, of the responsibility of rulers, clerical and secular, though written in Latin became known to the poorer classes. He taught that the ultimate authority rested in the people, that the ruling class in Church and State was responsible to them for the right use of their power, teachings that could easily be perverted into harmony with the tenets

of John Ball. But Wycliffe never gave the practical application to his doctrine that his enemies charged. He exhorted all Christians to be law-abiding, to render their legal dues, and, like his Master, he withdrew when he saw the rashness of the multitude.

Some of the lower clergy, the wandering friars and the poor priests, too, no doubt, incited the peasants to defend their rights, but Wycliffe exhorted his preachers not to weaken, but to strengthen the bonds of society, to preach the Gospel that the ties which bind men together might be enlarged. By his doctrine of dominion Wycliffe evidently meant that the clergy should do their duty to their people, not that they should be robbed. The nobles interpreted it that the property of the clergy should be confiscated for their benefit. The peasants in turn asked what right the land-owners had to feudal dues when they were not fulfilling their feudal duties. They could not answer the peasants' questions, so they put down the insurrection, turned against Wycliffe and forbade his teaching. The same love of property which had produced the opposition of the clergy to Wycliffe produced now the opposition of the nobles to the peasants, and later to the Lollards as the friends of the peasants. There were causes in abundance for the uprising without charging it to Wycliffe or his itinerants. In fact, Wycliffe was the man who saw the rights and wrongs of both classes, and

urged that the superfluous property of the Church should be given to the land-owners that they might relieve the burdens of the poor. After all the charges and counter-charges, who was responsible for the insurrection, Wycliffe, the peasants, their oppressors or the selfishness, the extravagance and the unnecessary burdens? According to our temperament we might blame Wycliffe for the rise of the peasants against their oppressors, the attempt of the barons to rob the clergy, Thomas Cromwell's destruction of the monasteries, or George Canning's calling into being the republics of the New World to restore the balance in the Old. In quite another sense "all things are possible to him that believeth."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BIBLE.

Wycliffe belongs both to the early renaissance of literature and the early reformation of religion. Five important movements centered in him: First, the assertion of national and individual liberty; second, the preaching of the Gospel to the people; third, freeing the sacrament of the Lord's Supper from superstition; fourth, opposition to the mendicant orders; fifth, the translation of the Bible into English, of which the last was by all means the greatest. In his theological controversies Wycliffe had made a thorough study of the Bible, and made it the test in matters of religious practice and belief. From his college days it seems he had determined to furnish the people a more serviceable text of the Scriptures. The nobles had a Norman-French edition but the common people were like the Prodigal Son—no man ministered unto them. A popular version of the entire Bible was greatly needed, and its publication was Wycliffe's great gift to posterity. It furnished the English people the best means of enlightenment against the assumptions of the hierarchy and the pope, and condemned the claims of authority and tradition, as

well as the false views and still falser lives of the clergy and the monks. Wycliffe's translation of the Bible was the leaven that worked silently yet rapidly, and its legitimate result was the English Reformation.

By happy coincidence at the very time Wycliffe was ready to give the Word of God to the people in the mother tongue, the English language won its triumph and became the vehicle of popular thought. The One Hundred Years' War led to an intense hatred of all things French, the language as well as their customs and manners, and hence to a strong desire to promote and perfect the English language as a means of common speech. In opposition to the Norman spirit and government, feudal domination, chivalry and distinction of classes and of the Roman spirit in the Church, dependence on the pope, and unquestioning obedience, were arising the national feeling, the traits, ideas, and temperament that made the English a distinctive people. In 1362 the Jubilee Gift of Edward III was the use of the English language in the courts. In 1363 the chancellor first delivered an English speech in opening parliament. In 1381 Archbishop Courtenay opened parliament with a sermon in English, and the clergy began to preach, once in awhile at least, in the native tongue. In determining to supplement the services of the Church held in an unknown language by regular religious instruction in the mother tongue,

Wycliffe carried out the tendency of the age, wherein as always lay the great source of his strength. The use of Norman French had been one of the barriers between the people and the lords, both spiritual and temporal. It was necessary, as the common people were rising and the Commons becoming one of the ruling forces of the land, that the various sections of English society should be joined together as only a common speech could unite them. The use of the native tongue, too, helped to develop the spirit of nationality. Before this the children in school must leave the mother tongue and learn French or Latin. It was a great relief when the poor priests brought the Gospel home to the poor, and monkish Latin gave place to the English Bible.

If we represent Wycliffe as the morning star it seems as if we ought to think of Castor and Pollux, the twin harbingers of the coming harvest, for along with Wycliffe there arose another great master of the English tongue, and one who pilloried the priests and the friars almost as effectively. Chaucer was the father of English poetry, Wycliffe of later English prose, and together they must mold the English language to secure as their audience the mass of the English people. Chaucer, like Horace, held the mirror up to his age that they might see what manner of men they were, but instead of repenting they went their way and quickly forget the vision. More like Juvenal,

Wycliffe went at vice with a club. With all the intensity of a Hebrew prophet he hated those who were destroying the people, the selfish and indolent clergy, the dissolute monks, the rapacious friars, all of whom were plucking the wool, but leaving the sheep among the thorns. He issued tract after tract in rough, clear, homely English, the terse, vehement sentences, and stinging sarcasms inciting to anger if not to repentance. Professor Shirley says: "It is in his original tracts that the exquisite pathos, the keen delicate ideas, the manly passion of the short, nervous sentences, fairly overmasters the weakness of the unformed language, and gives us English which can not be read without a feeling of beauty to this hour."

At Oxford Wycliffe had formulated his views and taught them to the younger scholars, who took notes, and spread his ideas over England. When driven from the society of the learned at Oxford, he put his views in tracts for the people, much like the Tractarian Movement in the nineteenth century. On many subjects he held radical opinions, such as the profligacy and laziness of the clergy, the formalism of the Church services, the worship of the saints, the neglect of preaching, the veneration of relics, and the granting of indulgences. The more novel, striking or contrary to received doctrines his opinions were the more rapidly they spread. He prepared a number of short sermons or sketches on the Sunday Gospels, crisp, direct,

forcible, to serve as skeletons for his itinerants to clothe them in their own words. Though a master of the Scholastic system and a controversalist of rare power, Wycliffe discarded the ponderous Latin and spoke to the people in the common speech. Learning he felt is not to embalm or to restrict knowledge but to open the doors and let the light shine. During the last six years of tremendous effort he put forth about ninety works in Latin, and sixty in English. He wrote on the heresies and vices of the friars, the apostasy of the clergy from Christ, the Lord's Supper, the schism of the Roman pontiff, the temporal possessions of the Church, and short expositions of Scripture for his preachers or the people. Altogether he issued more than two hundred publications, mostly tracts, which the Wycliffe society is gathering and arranging, greatly to the saving of work no doubt to the future biographer.

To Wycliffe belongs the credit of seeing clearly the need for a complete translation of the Bible and its beneficial, stimulating influence on the English people. Rejected by the clergy and misunderstood by the nobility, he determined to appeal to the people and spread among them the means of enlightenment and freedom, the little leaven which would transform the kingdom and give a new impulse to society. Hitherto the Bible had been a sealed book to all but a few of the wealthy, for the Latin Vulgate, or possibly a French translation, was

the only accessible form, and the people could not read it or understand its teachings. In fact, the Bible was interpreted by the priests to suit their own purposes or the interests of their order, much as the Sibylline books had been by the priests of Rome. The New Testament is the best authority and the greatest force against religious corruption and expensive living; the best in its teachings, and the strongest in its appeals to the English people. Robert Grosseteste, the great Bishop of Lincoln, had said: "Only with its aid could Peter's boat be guided to the haven of salvation." The papal supremacy, priestly arrogance, the power of wealth, official and personal corruption, ignorance and servitude, political and social cowardice and oppression, were all doomed under the light of the Word of God. Wycliffe translated the Bible to give the people the truth, liberty, morality,' independence in thought and action, and though the fruit may have seemed slow in ripening, yet the harvest of the ages has abundantly justified his expectations and his wisdom.

Wycliffe determined that the Bible should no longer be an unknown book in an unknown tongue to ordinary men and women. A contemporary says: "Master John Wycliffe by translating the Bible into English has laid it more open to the laity than it formerly was to the most learned of the clergy." His translation varies little from the modern forms of language, was clear to the peo-

ple then, and is understood by the Yorkshire peasants to-day. It seems to have been used as the basis of our Authorized Version, many of the same words and forms of expression being used. Of all the English worthies, we owe to Wycliffe more than to any other person the English language, the English Bible and the reformed religion. The permanence of Christian civilization, the maintenance of national morality and social righteousness, depend first of all on having the Bible freely read by the people. No people can be enslaved or long tyrannized over with the translated Bible in their hands and inspiring their thought. The Boers, going into battle with their musket in one hand and their Bible in the other, might be a small people, a little folk, but they taxed the resources of the mighty British Empire. Even now Britain must give them self-government and all the attributes of liberty.

For Wycliffe's purpose of reaching the people with the Gospel it was absolutely essential that the Bible should be translated into the vulgar tongue, that his itinerants might preach to the people from the Bible in a language which they could understand. He could not translate all the Bible alone, so he took the New Testament and gave the Old Testament to his friend, Nicholas Hereford. Wycliffe's work was superior to Hereford's in style and spirit, being simple and Anglo-Saxon, while Hereford's was stiff and Latinized. He first

translated the parts of the New Testament which he used in his services, the Gospels and the Epistles for the various Sundays, and went on till he had the entire Bible written in the mother tongue. The New Testament was published about 1378, and again in 1380. With the aid of his assistants he succeeded in getting the whole of the Old Testament translated, and it was published shortly before his death. He translated directly from the Latin Vulgate, for he did not feel well enough acquainted with the Greek and Hebrew to use the original texts. There were many inaccuracies, to be sure, but they were not very important compared with the immense advantage of having the Bible in the language of the people. The transformation of the average Englishman, of which the English Bible was the principal factor, from a narrow bigot to a man of comprehension or toleration was a tremendous miracle, almost equal to the historian Froude's example of the Christian Constantine becoming head of the Roman Empire.

John Purvey, who was Wycliffe's favorite pupil, his curate at Lutterworth and an earnest helper in the spread of his work, went over the entire Bible to remove obscurities, and correct mistakes, that the people might have a correct rendering of the sacred text. He made the edition more simple and flexible, with less of Latin and more of English phrase and spirit, the edition that was the most widely used and the precursor of our English

Bible to-day. The first and second editions are now reprinted in good shape by the Oxford press, a worthy example of literary homage and wisdom. This Revised Version was published in 1388, four years after Wycliffe's death. Copies of this English Bible were rapidly multiplied and circulated, one hundred and seventy being still in existence. One copy, it is said, belonged to Humphrey, the Good Duke of Gloucester, one to Henry VII, one to Richard III, and one to Edward VI, and one was given as a birthday present to Queen Elizabeth. In 1391 a bill was brought into parliament to prohibit the circulation of the English Scriptures, but John of Gaunt said sharply that the French had the Bible in their tongue and they would have the law of their belief in English as other nations had in their language. It would be interesting to trace, if the data were at hand, how the translation of parts of the Bible affected Wycliffe's own thought and actions, and how the truth was revealed more and more to his own soul, as he brought it within reach of the common understanding.

When we inquire definitely for the result of the translation of the Bible, and for the reasons of the opposition to it, we strike at the root of the whole mediæval religious system. Ignorance and slavery of many kinds, intelligence and freedom in various forms go together, and the Church hierarchy was sharp enough to understand the source and the limitation of their power. There had been

several attempts at translations of parts of the Bible, those especially used for the Church services, and the translation of the Psalms had been authorized. But Wycliffe translated the Bible so that his followers could read and interpret it each one for himself, directly contrary to the spirit of the priests of Rome, who sought to keep the people in ignorance, that they might the more readily play on their credulity. The Bible exalts the individual believer as over against the absolute power of either Church or State, it teaches that all are priests before God, and that the prayers of the poor or the outcast come up before God just as effectually as those of the ordained clergy. The question between Wycliffe and his opponents was a simple one. Was the pope or the Bible, tradition or the Word, human authority or God's law, to be the final arbiter in the beliefs and acts of men?

Richard II, alarmed by the peasant's revolt and the attitude of the barons wanted to strengthen himself with the Church, and so by royal order he expelled Wycliffe from Oxford. Like a wise man and a true hero he at once set to work to forge the great weapon of future warfare against the triumphant hierarchy, that mighty force before which both clergy and royal power would succumb, the English Bible. We might almost date the beginning of religious and civil liberty with the proclamation of Wycliffe's views of government and the establishing of them in the minds of the

people by the reading of the Bible. The Church at this time was singularly averse to having the Scriptures translated into the native tongue, much as the later Church has been against the large use of the Greek New Testament, as though the truth would undermine their authority and still more their practice. The hierarchy of that time were justly afraid of the Bible, for its free use meant individual freedom in thought and worship, which the Church authorities were not willing to grant. From Matt. vii, 26, it was easy to conclude that the whole papal system was founded upon the sand, the translated Bible in the hands of the people was a most efficient counter mine, and no one knew when the entire structure would fall to pieces.

"History's pages but record
One Death-grapple in the darkness 'tween old systems and the Word."

But "the Word of the Lord endureth forever."

It was an exceedingly bold act to translate the Bible in the face of the opposition, and nothing but devotion to the kingdom of truth, and the assurance that the final victory lay with the people rather than with the ecclesiastics led Wycliffe to undertake the task. To the clergy of the day it seemed like casting pearls before swine to give the people the Bible in their own tongue, while it was really placing in their reach the greatest instrument of their own emancipation. Some of the ecclesiastics even claimed that the English language was

not a fit instrument for the Bible, the vulgar tongue being too common for the holy records. They had forgotten that Christ, like Socrates, had brought divine philosophy down from the skies, and made it dwell among the common people, and to treat of things good and evil. They felt that some languages are not fit to pray in, that some words are not tony, not holy, degrading to the Gospel of purity and truth. In 1229 the Council of Toulouse had forbidden the laity to read the Bible or to have it in their possession, as the fruitful source of heresy and schism. But Wycliffe said: "Though there were a hundred popes and all the friars of the world were turned into cardinals, yet we should learn more from the Gospels than from all the multitude." Christ and His apostles evangelized the world by making known the Scriptures in a language which was familiar to the people. It is significant that at the Day of Pentecost each man heard the word in his own tongue wherein he was born.

One sufficient reason for the clerical opposition to Wycliffe's English Bible was that it acted as a search-light to reveal the selfishness, the avarice, the injustice, the utter worldliness of the priesthood. The English clergy at that time were clearly not Bible Christians, or Gospel preachers, and tried by the very book on which their authority rested they were sadly wanting. The Bible set a standard of life which the clergy did not wish to follow. They could not and would not drink of

Christ's cup, and like Peter or Erasmus they would prefer flight to being crucified. But their failure to reveal God's purpose for men in their lives made it the more necessary that the Bible should be given to the people to read and hear freely. To the mass of the people it had been a sealed book, in a dead and foreign tongue, covered under commentaries and the fathers. Wycliffe resolved that it should quit the dusty monasteries, and the seclusion of the schools and come forth to fulfill a higher mission as the book and teacher of the people. A clerical contemporary says of the translation of the Bible: "In this way the Gospel pearl is cast abroad and trodden under foot of swine." Rather, in translating the Bible into English, Wycliffe for the Anglo-Saxon peoples rolled back forever "the stone from the well of the water of life."

We can scarcely overestimate the importance of this translation and making the Bible the book of the English people; the elevation it brought to the thoughts and manners of the homes, the direction it gave to education and thought, the views of man and his place in the government and the Church, the consecration of his work to some purpose, and the working out of his destiny. The Bible to the Anglo-Saxon race is peculiarly the people's book. It is the household companion, the educator of the children, the molder of the lives and the criterion for old and young as to faith,

morals and manners. A Bible-reading people is intellectually awake, and industrially active and progressive. When a savage prince asked Queen Victoria what had made England great she sent him a copy of the Bible. Our President would have sent the American Constitution. The Bible, too, is the great bond of union among the people of the United States, and is doing more to mold us into a harmonious nation than any other influence. It is the greatest single factor in modern civilization. The right to read and interpret the Bible each man for himself gave us our Anglo-Saxon freedom, and is the supreme guarantee of liberty, political and religious. By this teaching, love and human service are becoming more and more the bond of union among Christians, and not agreement in dogma or Church rites. Wycliffe was one of the first to find out that the Bible was a great book. That better than foreign wars or plunder, better than insurrection or violent change of the social order, were instruction in righteousness and individual manhood as the means of national regeneration. Through the Bible he would save people from themselves, their ignorance, their passions, their prejudices, their class hatreds, to a life of service. He was wise enough to see that real popular liberty lay in the education and morality of the people, and he showed his faith in both the Bible and the people by putting the preaching of the Word in the place of ceremonies and monkish fables.

The interest of the English people in the new Bible showed how greatly they needed and longed for religious instruction. Many of the wealthy laity purchased the entire work, copies were rapidly multiplied, and Lollardism was widely spread. The poor peasants contributed their pennies and bought a Bible in common and studied out its teachings, laying the foundation for that love of righteousness and liberty in the English people, which would not rest till freedom was their birthright. Some of them, perhaps several together, bought the coveted manuscript, paying as high as $200 for a copy; or gave a load of hay or an ox for a few leaves of St. Peter or St. Paul. In 1408 translations of the Bible were forbidden, but the Scriptures were still copied and extensively read. Many were imprisoned and even killed for having the Bible in their mother tongue. Little companies, however, met at night to read it, as the early Christians under the Roman persecution, and some learned portions and repeated them to others. Thus was formed a strong undercurrent of thought among the English people, which did not appear in full strength till the reign of Elizabeth, and culminated in political and religious freedom under the Stuarts.

A few passages from Wycliffe's Bible will illustrate its style better than any description:

"And Marye seyde, My soule worschipe the Lord, and my spirit joiede in God myn heelpe.

"The hungrynge he fillide with goodis, and the riche he lefte empty. As he spak to oure fadirs, to Abraham, and to his seed, into worldis.

"No man seweth a pacche of rude or newe clothe to an old clothe, ellis he takith awey the newe supplement or pacche and a more brekynge is maad. And no man sendith newe wyn into oolde botelis, or wyn vesselis, ellis the wyn shal burste the wyn vesselis, and the wyn shal be held out.

"And aftir sixe dayes Jhesus took Petre, and James, and John, and ledith hem by hem selve aloone in to an high hil; and he is transfigurid before hem. And his clothis ben maad schynynge and white ful moche as snow, and which maner clothis a fullere, or walkere of cloth, may not make white on erthe. And Helye with Moyses apperide to hem, and thei weren spekynge with Jhesu.

"Sothli who euere ben lad by the spirit of God thes ben the sones of God. Forsothe ye han not taken ewtsoone the spirit of seruage in drede, but ye han taken the spirit of adopcioun of sones, that is to be sons of God by grace, in which spirit we cryen, Abba, Fadir. Forsoth the ilke spirit yeldith witnessyng to our spirit, that we ben the sones of God; forsyth if sones, and eyris, sothli eyris of God, trweli euene eyris of Christ; if nethelees we to gidere suffren, that and we be glorified to gidere. Trewli I deeme, that the passions of this tyme ben not euene worthi to the glorie to comynge, that schal be schewid in us."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MAN AND HIS WORK.

Though Wycliffe was opposed to pilgrimages, his admirers will venture upon a side trip to the small market town of Lutterworth, the one place, after Oxford, perhaps, which he might call home. When driven from the University he found in this quiet place refuge and sympathy and delight in his parish duties and in the company of his disciples. The Church in which he ministered is still standing, simple and strong like its great rector; the saints and angels on the walls, and the fresco of the Last Judgment on the ceiling, calling to fidelity in the preaching of the Word. The living was worth £26 per year, say $1,000 present value. The memory of Wycliffe still consecrates this modest inland town, of about five hundred people now as then, whose chief glory is the record of his life and his work. Here he labored diligently, writing numerous tracts and sermons, translating the Bible, rounding out that purposeful life which made him the greatest of the English reformers. The years of deep study and reflection at Oxford University had brought him into close touch with the Divine Will, and the last six years of his life were

filled with a tremendous effort to have that will done among the English people. In this, too, he was a worthy follower of the Man of Nazareth, his teaching and spirit were an echo of the times of the apostles, his work like theirs a laying of the foundation of the kingdom.

We ask what kind of a man was Wycliffe? Lechler thus describes his appearance: "A tall, thin figure, covered with a long light gown of black cloth, with a girdle about his body, the head adorned with a full flowing beard, exhibiting features clean and sharply cut, the eye clear and penetrating, the lips firm closed in token of resolution, the whole man wearing an aspect of lofty earnestness, and replete with dignity and character." He had a strong intelligent face, black deep-set eyes, a wide high brow, with Roman nose, sunken cheeks, a firm-set mouth, a long white beard, an expression of force, evidently a man of power. His keen, intelligent eyes, resolute lips, with a delicate determined smile, indicated the fearless heart, the courage of conviction, a quiet consciousness of strength and nobility of character.

Chaucer, in describing the faithful priest, makes us feel he is giving a portrait of Wycliffe, whom he had possibly met while with John of Gaunt:

> "A good man was there of religion,
> And was a poor parson of a town;
> But rich he was of holy thought and work;
> He was also a learned man, a clerk
> That Christ's Gospel truly would preach,
> His parisshens devoutly he would teach."

As to mental equipment Wycliffe was a man of thought, alert, creative, original, resourceful, a leader of men by his ability, and by his earnestness and moral conviction. He spent forty years at Oxford, becoming an accomplished dialectician and developing an immense range of intellectual power. He was clear-sighted, with a broad vision, taking time for reflection, a wise man whom his friends called Johannis Augustini. We know his cast of mind—vigorous, courageous, thoroughly Anglo-Saxon, speaking in a voice that is distinctively English, so English that our blood tingles in response to his defiance of wrong and injustice.

Christ judged men not by their beliefs or entirely by their actions, but by their temperament or disposition that lay behind and determined the character of the life. He cared most for the disposition of the soul toward truth, whether open or closed, the spirit of a man from which feelings and thought come. The spiritual geography of a man is difficult to describe, those subtle qualities which really determine his character and worth. Wycliffe was a lovable man, attractive, strong, unselfish, quickening others for their best work. In his rejection by nobles and clergy, many friends clung to him, reflecting credit on themselves as well as on their master. Human, sympathetic, courageous, self-sacrificing, he was the worthy product of the Yorkshire yeomen and of University life. He was one of the brightest and truest and bravest of men,

the greatest by far of all the reformers before the Reformation. He belongs to the true heroes of mankind, who delight the men of heart and brain. He had the personal charm which accompanies real greatness. We would have liked to have seen and heard and known him, and his influence was deepened by the spotless purity of his life. A great man has somewhat of the saint as well as of the hero, and only a man with some of that quality in him appreciates his work or spirit. Wycliffe is greatly honored by such historians as Green, by those who see the real causes underlying events, and have spiritual insight to understand the work of such race heroes.

It is difficult to do justice to Wycliffe's personality, it was so large and many sided, so resolute and efficient. He was a man and to be a man is greater than to be a reformer, a theologian, a scholar, a dialectician, a statesman, a noble, a bishop, or a king, except a king among men. We do not follow little or mean but strong men, those with sublime moral courage, who take life in earnest. The qualities of our Anglo-Saxon heroes are plain—intelligence, insight, energy, courage, moral strength, devotion to the right, sympathy for the people. To this class Wycliffe belonged, taking his place with Alfred, Chatham, Lincoln, and Gladstone. He had the keenness of perception, the firmness of character, and determination of purpose of a north country yeoman. He was one of

the most sturdy heroes English soil ever produced, was a better balanced man than Luther or Calvin, as admirable a character as John Wesley, with very much the same qualities. He accepted the responsibility for his teachings and acts, dared to look the consequences square in the face, and extended the sphere of his actions ever further and of his thoughts ever deeper.

Wycliffe, like all great men, is known through his work. What he did and said and thought stand out in commanding relief as the distinctive mark of that age. Without a printing press, a literary revival, or a public trained to read, we wonder that he accomplished so much. Wycliffe was eminent as a scholar, a diplomat, a statesman, a writer, an orator, a theologian, a preacher; so many sided that like Michael Angelo, or Leonardo da Vinci, life seems a greater thing from the way he lived it. He commended personal piety, claimed liberty for human thought, sowed the seed of sound and liberal principles, scornfully denounced tyranny and corruption, and inspired hatred of wrong and injustice. In opposing selfishness and oppression one feels the sense of power, as though he had omnipotence behind him, feels and knows that right will be avenged and hence becomes a prophet. Crowds of eager and admiring disciples spread his teaching over England and the Continent, and the cry of reform was never again hushed. There was such an identity of civilization among the countries

of Europe, such a similarity of spirit in their national development, that other people took up and carried on his work. The secret of Wycliffe's world-helpfulness and the spirit underlying it, was devotion to the right, as he saw it, and to his fellow-men, whose need he felt. We are to heed the command; do your work, do it well, look not to the reward, it will come, and some one will build your sepulcher and put on the superscription.

We do not care so much about Wycliffe's logic, or weighty arguments or subtle distinctions of doctrine, as the moral lineaments and effective force of the man himself. His life is the key to interpret the age. We honor the men who do the work the world wants done, who have the insight to know what that work is and honesty of purpose to accomplish it. The pioneers in race development are akin in spirit and features, for the spiritual needs of each generation call forth the qualities demanded. Wycliffe was a man of feeble constitution, but of great energy and personality. The needs of his country converted this simple priest into a politician, a statesman, a defender of parliament, a champion of the people. He enjoyed the friendship of John of Gaunt, the favor of the king and of the Princess of Wales, he was nominated king's chaplain and royal commissioner, and was called on by parliament to plead the cause of the nation against the pope. For five full centuries his pure and courageous life has been aiding and

stimulating the cause of religious and political freedom.

We need make no apologies for Wycliffe, but heartily accept him as the first and one of the very greatest of English reform leaders. He believed and trusted the Bible, reason, conscience and common sense, an eminently practical man with a clear-sighted imagination. He was full of true worldly wisdom, with a character hammered out on the anvil of daily life by contact with men. He was firm, determined, sarcastic at times, but generous, gentle, self-sacrificing, who like his master came not to be ministered unto but to minister. He might have been a bishop, and been forgotten, by keeping silent or dissembling; but by his pungent criticism he put away any hope of preferment. It was a time that needed men, and kings and nobles and bishops were not measuring up to the call. There are times when the blows fall thick and fast on the heated iron, and character is rapidly shaped, as Wycliffe's was, by the tremendous problems he had to meet. His strength was revealed to him in proportion as it was needed, it grew with his insight and extended usefulness, and he was equal to the calls upon his resources. He helped to redeem his age from obscurity, and he and Chaucer made the fourteenth century an epoch in English history.

This old world is pretty fair in its judgment of men, if we only give time for the object to be re-

moved far enough from the eye to bring it into proper perspective. In going West on the Canadian Pacific Railway as the train leaves Glacier, behind the green mountains in the foreground a peak, Sir Donald, full of strength and sublimity, slowly rises till it becomes the dominating feature of the landscape; so in the recent decades John Wycliffe has risen out of the obscurity of the fourteenth century till he appears as the controlling force of the entire epoch. Historical criticism has made ordinary men of a number of heroes, but it has also rescued a number of others from undeserved forgetfulness if not obloquy. Just as antiquarians take some daub or distorted picture and carefully remove the additions till the old image shines forth in all its strength and beauty, so these historical characters are restored and men wonder that their works were ever forgotten. This was peculiarly true of Wycliffe, for the writers of his day and of the century following were men of the Church to whom the great reformer was an arch heretic, trebly cursed by the pope and the English hierarchy, and of whom nothing could be said too bitter or vile. Immediately after his death Wycliffism meant heresy, his followers were punished with death and the next generation forgot him, and his life lay buried like some precious manuscript or picture in a mediæval garret, till discovered a century or so ago. The world had to wait till the spirit of historical research had become strong that his

works might be discovered, his relation to the English Reformation understood and his influence and character appreciated and honored. The plays of Shakespeare and the poems of Chaucer, the closer study of English political and social life, have helped us to understand the spirit and character of the times, to reconstruct for ourselves somewhat of the historical setting of the great reformer upon which our understanding and estimate of his work and influence depend. This has led to a great revival of interest in Wycliffe, to several excellent biographies and descriptions of his age, which have rescued his name from ignominy and forgetfulness, and restored his work and teachings to the world.

We magnify not unjustly the personality of the reformer, really a great man measured by the reed of an angel, the only adequate measuring stick. The emancipator of the race from some bondage means a great man; as Moses, Paul, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Lincoln, Wycliffe. There is an especial glory, too, in being in touch with the spirit of the age, being able to express its desires, its purpose, its tendency. The political, religious, theological, social, economic opinion of the time was largely represented in Wycliffe, and the world will not again let his name become obscured. The other men of the age are important as connected with him, for he had the compass and chart and knew the port. We think of the melancholy biographies of those who are on the wrong side, with

good intentions but destined to fight against the spirit of progress, with their interests and friends on the side opposed to God and His kingdom. Not every vessel is fitted to stand the fierceness of the storm, but Wycliffe was as immovable as the cliff on the Tees from which the family took its name. He stands out like a giant in comparison with the opponents of the truth, with those who are compelled to cry with the Emperor Julian: "O Galilean, Thou has conquered."

Not all the great and beneficent changes in the world, or of any one age, are to be ascribed to the credit of any one man. Nor are we to cast blame upon him for the failure of what we might call the legitimate results of his work. The cold dark days of spring, the dry south winds of summer, the early frosts of autumn, may check the development of the fruit at the critical stage. Had it not been for the opposition of the English clergy, England might have been the source of the great Reformation two hundred years before Germany took that honored position under Luther. Had the House of Lancaster stood firm to its original position in reference to the Church and the State, the life and work of Wycliffe would have leavened all England, and brought religious as well as civil liberty. But the Lancastrian kings needed the support of the Church to keep their throne from rocking too violently, and they turned from the call to the Promised Land for the flesh pots of Egypt.

It was a congenial soil and a fruit-bearing people, if only the opportunity had not been lost by the selfishness of the clergy and the king, and the riotous nature of the nobles. As much as we admire Wycliffe for the patriotic and wise stand that he took, so much must we condemn the later Lancastrians and the higher English clergy for their blindness and their subservience to the forces of evil for their people. No greater blame can rest upon men than that of deliberately betraying the cause of their nation and their people for some imaginary personal gain, or from devotion to tradition and authority against the real interests of their country. Like the fool who was brayed in his own mortar the judgment of history grinds them between their selfish spirit and their contemptible deeds.

When the Reformation finally came in England it was upon practical and administrative, not on evangelical lines, as the work of Wycliffe had prophesied for his people. But it would have been more quickly and effectively established, in a better spirit, and with more commendable fruits, had the later leaders profited by the work of their great predecessor. Henry VIII, Cromwell, and Cranmer were not as great as Wycliffe, and their reforms shaped in a period of transition, were not as sincere or broadly Christian. The significance of Wycliffe's work lay in his truer conception of God, of His relation to men and of His purpose in their

lives. To him God was immanent in His Church, and the Church was to assume the spiritual likeness of its Lord. The spirit of the English race calling to perfection made constant reformation necessary, till the ideal of Christ became the conscious aim of the nation. We might almost imagine the conflict as one between the Church under its papal organization and its supreme Head, the latter again being crucified by the zealots for authority and tradition, but again overcoming the world.

Wycliffe was known to his students as Doctor Evangelicus, a title earned by the purity and sincerity of his life; by his own earnest preaching of the Gospel, and by sending out itinerants to preach to the poor; by the translation of the Bible and by asserting its importance as a means of salvation. He was a single minded devotee of the truth and of God's law. The kind of men who love the Bible, who are nurtured in its precepts and molded by its spirit, are peculiarly helpful in the world's uplift. Wycliffe impressed his personality socially and religiously on the students, on the people of his three parishes, on the parliament and on the king's council. He was a man of intense earnestness, of wide sympathies, of self-sacrificing benevolence. He had great influence with the common people, and showed great wisdom as well as boldness in appealing to them when rejected by the educated and powerful, for they were a better jury than the nobles or ecclesiastics. Love of right-

eousness is the keystone of character, and in this both Wycliffe and the English people excelled. Wycliffe's love for the truth and the poor was intense, controlling, and he won in his contest because love is absolutely the one thing that will overcome evil.

Wycliffe died December 31, 1384, from a paralytic stroke, and was buried in peace in his parish church at Lutterworth. Some advocate quaintly remarks, "It was admirable that a hare so often hunted, with so many packs of dogs, should die at last quietly sitting in his own form." He was gathered to his fathers like a shock of corn fully ripe, his work was done, the sowing was faithfully and largely made, the firstfruit was waving before him, the full harvest would take too long for him to await its ingathering. Thirty years after his death the Council of Constance ordered his body dug up and cast out of consecrated ground. For twelve years the decree was not obeyed, till Bishop Fleming of Lincoln, a former sympathizer with Wycliffe, but now a typical reactionary, with a great gathering of prelates and monks, dug up and burned his bones, and threw his ashes into the Swift, a little stream flowing by the village of Lutterworth. Fuller in his quaint language says: "The brook did convey his ashes to the Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean, and thus the ashes of Wycliffe were an emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all

the world over." This Bishop Fleming founded Lincoln College, Oxford, as a bulwark against heretics, a little college of theologians, as he calls it, "To defend the mysteries of the sacred page against these ignorant laics, who profaned with swinish snouts its most holy pearls." With what intense earnestness this pious bishop, the extreme advocate of ecclesiastical uniformity and authority and tradition, would have said his Miserere had he known that the grim irony of fate, with a quiet chuckle at the mere audacity of the thing, would bring forth as the most distinguished representative of this iron-bound college John Wesley, the eighteenth century Wycliffe.

Wycliffe was not perfect; great men never are. In passing from Abraham and Moses and David and Elijah, men who had the faults of their vigorous natures, to Joseph and Joshua and Daniel, who displayed no weakness, we feel an atmosphere of lighter weight. The keen and natural indignation of Wycliffe, like that of Paul, was not always suppressed. We are surprised that the personal element had so little force, that devotion to great principles so sincerely and constantly overcame all personal considerations. He was not a courtier like Chaucer, rather a mighty son of Thor, with his battle-ax breaking the skull of false gods, and rending the yoke of superstition and cruelty from the people's necks. It was a time of masculine virtues, of virility in thought and deed, when men

killed each other without reserve in either a good or an evil cause. Wycliffe stood, a world champion and guide, between the Middle Ages and the modern world, between the speculations of the Schoolmen and the revolt of Northern Europe from the domination of the Papal See. In the crises of the world's history a few lofty spirits, possessed of that personal force which transcends all argument, and that mastery inherent in a noble purpose, arise as beacon lights to illumine and direct the succeeding ages of men. In ancient legend Time, jealous of man's glory, goes about the popular hero each day clipping with her shears a little off his reputation; but with more generous spirit the converted goddess is at present adding the royal purple to Wycliffe's robe, the badge of his true worth and kingly dignity.

The death of Wycliffe took away his personal direction and influence, but his teachings continued to spread and the movement penetrated every class of society. The jealousy of the hierarchy on the part of the barons, the socialistic dreams of the peasants, the common people's hatred of the friars, the intense longing for personal morality, all blended in a common hostility to the Church and a resolve to substitute personal righteousness for the dogmatic and ecclesiastical system. The persecution of Courtenay and Arundel robbed the movement of many of its learned adherents, and crushed out its support at the University, but the nobles

defended the new movement, and London being a commercial center and thought-free became largely Lollard, and then Puritan. Their principal tenets were: the supreme authority of the Scriptures as the rule of faith, the finished work of Christ as the only Savior, the denial of transubstantiation, auricular confession, image worship, the papal hierarchy and the priestly office in the mass. One of the best emblems of Wycliffe, his followers, his spirit, his weapons, and the truths for which he stood is the granite column recently erected to his memory at Lutterworth on the base of which is the simple inscription, "Search the Scriptures."

The adherents of Wycliffe were popularly called Lollards, some think from the word lollen, to sing or lull, others from the word loll, to lounge about, but his adversaries derived it from lolia or tares, which he was sowing among the wheat. From some reports we might judge that a large part of the people, one-third or in places one-half, were followers of Wycliffe, but probably like the Protestants in France at present, they formed a somewhat numerous and influential minority. Just after Wycliffe's death it was claimed that his followers abounded everywhere and among all classes, nobles, commons, peasants, in the cities, universities, even in the monastic cells. They were strong in London, a full match for their opponents at Oxford, with influence enough in parliament, that when an ordinance was passed by the lords in 1382, sup-

pressing Wycliffe's itinerant preachers, it was annulled on petition of the Commons. Indeed these preachers were supported many years by the country members of parliament. The Churchmen wanted to punish the heretics but parliament would not pass the laws, and sheriffs would not execute the old ones, or help the clergy bring them to trial. Still there is a tower at Lambeth Palace named after the Lollards who were confined there.

The Bishop of Norwich by killing the peasants of his own diocese and then butchering the people of Flanders in his ungodly holy crusade, prepared the English clergy for burning heretics when they got official sanction. The disgraceful failure of this crusade greatly embittered the clergy and the friars against Wycliffe and his followers. It was the senseless rage of those who fail in an unrighteous cause against those of clearer insight and nobler spirit who refuse to countenance and even condemn their wicked deeds. Still there seem to have been comparatively few Lollards punished purely for religious reasons, for though Archbishops Courtenay and Arundel were violent against them, the English people do not like persecution. In 1401 the hierarchy got a law passed for the burning of heretics, no doubt the opening of a sad chapter in English history, but the Teutonic races do not take kindly to auto-da-fès. To show one's zeal for orthodoxy by hunting heretics or burning people at the stake is very much easier than re-

forming one's own life. To stop the spread of the hated doctrines parliament later enacted, that "whosoever they were who should read the Scriptures in the mother tongue, they should forfeit land, cattle, body, life and goods from their heirs forever; and so be condemned as heretics to God, enemies to the crown and most arrant traitors to the land." Lollardism retired from the hostile world, but kept on feeding on the Word, and growing sentiment and men, till under the Stuarts their successors overthrew in Strafford and Laud the double-headed monster of political and ecclesiastical tyranny.

Henry IV to secure the throne had purchased the alliance of the Church by promising persecution, to destroy one's enemies being as effectual a bribe for political loyalty as money or official position. Henry V, like his father, cemented his alliance with the papacy by burning poor Lollards, purchasing the favor of the Church with the lives of his subjects, "because he saw it pleased the priests." The Lancastrian kings sacrificed the people for the Church, but the time would come when under the Tudors the Church would be sacrificed for the people, whom it ought never to have deserted. The work of Henry VIII and Cromwell, however much of self-seeking and passion it displayed, was the legitimate fruit of Wycliffe's teaching and of the pusillanimity of his contemporaries. Wycliffe had found an enthusiastic disciple and a powerful protector in Good Queen Anne. She

brought a number of young men over to England to study the Bible, and she and her suite took his views back home with them to Bohemia, where they became the foundation of the Hussite reformation in the next generation. Wycliffe was not killed, his chief adherents shunned the stake, Huss and Jerome of Prague were burned, as were later Latimer and Ridley, which suggests the query whether martyrdom is not necessary to the success of a general reformation.

Among the hostile criticisms of Wycliffe, almost refreshing from the over-dosed malignity, is one by Walsingham: "On the feast of the passion of St. Thomas of Canterbury, John Wycliffe—that organ of the devil, that enemy of the Church, that author of confusion to the common people, that idol of heretics, that image of hypocrites, that restorer of schism, that storehouse of lies, that sink of flattery—being struck by the horrible judgment of God, was struck with palsy, and continued to live in that condition till St. Sylvester's Day, on which he breathed out his malicious spirit into the abodes of darkness." With his sterling qualities, enthusiastic and fearless temper, thoroughly trained intellectual faculties, brilliant and effective in argument, fierce and unsparing in denunciation, Wycliffe was, like Luther, just the man to fight the whole papal and clerical régime. We do not blame the hierarchy for hating him. They could not have been themselves and done otherwise. But

we do condemn them for being themselves, for their spirit, their view-point, their motives, their spiritual blindness, their pitiable perversion of their own lives and of the truth they were to preach and exemplify. It is a delight for some men to denounce, to punish, to burn, if possible, the enemy of their order, their Church, the faith of their fathers, and particularly the means of their livelihood; and as the great tidal wave of satisfaction rolls back over their souls it brings a feeling of sweet deliciousness that one rarely meets with in this life.

On the other hand, Oxford University, his Alma Mater, in 1406, bears this tribute to one of the chiefest of her sons: "With one heart, voice and testimony we witness all his conduct throughout his whole life to have been praiseworthy; whose honest manners, profound scholarship, and redolent fame and sweetness we earnestly desire to be known to all the faithful; for we hold his ripe conversation and assiduous labors to tend to the praise of God, the salvation of others and the benefit of the Church. We, therefore, signify unto you by these presents that his conversation, from tender years up to the time of his death, was so excellent and honest, that never was there any annoyance or sinister suspicion or infamy reported of him; but in answering, reading, preaching, he behaved himself laudably, as a strong champion of the faith, vanquishing those who by voluntary beggary blasphemed Christ's religion, by Catholic sentences out

of Holy Scripture. Nor was the aforesaid doctor convicted of heresy, nor burned of our prelates after burial. God forbid that by our prelates a man of such probity should be condemned for a heretic, who wrote in logic, philosophy, divinity, morality and the speculative sciences without his peer, as we believe, in all our university."

It is impossible to trace to their source the tiny streamlets that form the mountain torrent, or to tell what precise influences have combined to make the man of energy, of force and success in life. So it is impossible to tell how many and what little streams of influence and power flow from his life to enrich the succeeding ages. Perhaps the time will come when we will not much care to trace the particular sources of the world's onward movement, but will be content and delighted to know that by the combined effort of earnest men there has been reared a structure on this earth which from its majestic proportions, its purity of design, its honesty of construction, and the symmetry and wealth and harmony of its adornment, the angels will hail as the temple of God. As a wise master builder, one of the broadest and most clear-sighted the world has ever known, Wycliffe tore away the mediæval structure and laid the foundations of universal freedom and enlightenment. He was the first of the great reformers, with plenty of successors but with no predecessor, a reformer in the broadest and best sense, and at no time since his

day has the spirit of reform been wanting in England or the Teutonic races of the Continent. As we sometimes sit down quietly by the side of a man, not to us an extraordinary personality, and talk on subjects that underlie the great problem of life, there gradually creeps over us the feeling that we are communing with a man of remarkable insight, deep moral purpose, and controlling force; so in studying the life of Wycliffe his personality grows upon us, till forgetting his limitations we see only the gigantic proportions of his character and work.

CHAPTER XV.

MAN OF THE KINGDOM.

Of all the great reformers Wycliffe has a peculiar claim to the title, Man of the Kingdom. In the line-up he should be given the position in modern football parlance of center rush or perhaps right tackle. He was the first to assail from the vantage-ground of national independence, of individual responsibility, of loyalty to the Great Head of the Church and of personal holiness, the despotic system of Roman autocracy which was enslaving the nations of Europe. In his doctrine of Dominion, that the whole world was under the immediate rule of God, and that all men held of him on terms of righteous service, he struck the key-note of the kingdom. To Wycliffe's thought immoral life broke the relationship between God and man, for Christ and the apostles and the early Church did not emphasize unity of belief, but life. The mission of truth is to work itself out into life, words, acts and to help people keep reincarnating itself in personal character. As God made the world to correspond to his thought, so these men of the kingdom are trying to change the world to conform to their thought in righteousness. Just as

if we have beautiful thoughts we will seek to express them in art, in literature, in the artistic completeness of our lives.

There is a peculiar type of men who are race heroes, devoted to the upraising of their fellowmen, irrespective of personal considerations. Even their bodies are likely to take on a peculiar type, not large, rather thin, with student face, broad brow, sharp piercing eyes, firm set mouth and chin, a calm, thoughtful, sympathetic air, that proclaims them the lovers and helpers of their race. The spirit of the King and of the kingdom dwells in them, the thinkers and doers among men. The qualities engendered by this hero-type are—energy, sincerity, independence, versatility, fruitfulness, springing up like a well of living water, or the fermenting of new wine. To these men, of whom Wycliffe is a fine example, the spiritual revelations come; to those who are definitely turned toward God and the supernatural, to those who will listen and obey, who always have one aim and one hope, to do His will and upbuild His kingdom. There are revelations all around us, of God, of duty, of truth, of service; and to men possessing these qualities the revelations of a higher purpose come, and they find their reason for being in fulfilling the higher destiny thus revealed. Every man's life is a thought of God, but some build on that thought largely, measuring up to the Divine plan, while others fail to realize its significance. These men

of the kingdom do the work of the kingdom, have the spirit of the kingdom, receive their inspiration from the kingdom, in which they are and in which they dwell.

The highest mission of such men as Wycliffe is to labor together with God both consciously and unconsciously, hand in hand with the power that worketh for righteousness. They are the men who build more wisely than they know, for their efforts are guided by a master hand. In touch with the Infinite they are able to interpret the past, to ennoble the present, to reveal the future, for their greatest mission is as God-revealers, the incarnation of the Divine will and purpose. They have keenness and largeness of insight which enables them to see God in all history, in the whole visible universe, in the human race and in national progress. They are of a peculiar type, of a similarity of temperament, nearer God's idea of what he intended man to be than the multitude of lesser mortals. These men point to the time when not only the mountain peaks, but the valleys and the recesses of the rocks will be lighted with the torch of truth, when the morning stars of all classes will sing together for joy at the coming of the kingdom of righteousness.

What does God expect of men of the kingdom? Love for the right and moral courage to stand by the truth, large faith in men and in God as the Redeemer of men. God expects great things

of men and rightly so, for He himself does the work through them, if willing to accept the Divine power and guidance. His idea of man is on a large scale, to be so like Him and so in touch with His Spirit that it shall not be they that live and work, but the Divine man working in them. God wants great, strong men, too great to be little or mean; men of courage, devotion, loyalty, inspiration, saints, heroes, overcomers, saviors of mankind.

The Holy Spirit is always searching for men, for greater men than He can find at hand, giants in God's might, for the upbuilding of His kingdom; men of the spirit and quality that God can use largely, clear-sighted, energetic, purposeful, self-reliant, reverent. These men of the kingdom belong to a spiritual brotherhood, the leaders and guides of men, who are not content to walk in the well-trodden path, but blaze a higher one for their own and for their disciples' feet. They are men who show brotherhood, intelligence, sympathy, who make a new trail to richer mines of spiritual and intellectual wealth. The people really long for the kingdom of righteousness, for the advent of the new reign of peace and love, they want a holy God to worship and a pure service, and these the men of the kingdom will supply.

The four essential elements in a great man's character are, great principles, great faith, great will, and great love. The men of the kingdom are

men of great principles that govern the life, of great faith that believes profoundly in the triumph of the right, of great will that will overcome all obstacles, and of great love that will conquer all opposition by the power of a great affection. They are world men, belonging to the whole human race in the range of their sympathies, brother to every man created in God's likeness. They are men of insight, initiative, courage, unselfish, intense in their hates and loves, obedient to the heavenly vision, doers of the Divine will. They are men full of life-enhancing power like the great pictures, on whom the tongue of fire abideth as on the disciples on the day of Pentecost. They are men that appeal to us, compel us to be interested in their success, and make us feel that their triumphs and defeats are ours. If we ask why Wycliffe was greater than the Schoolmen or men of his time, we must answer, in his ready and courageous response to the call of God, his deeper insight, his firmer convictions, his simple purpose, his sympathy with men that revealed to him the path of duty and the way of reform. He belonged to the class of men from whom God expects the most work, and sets the hardest tasks for them to do. They are men of ability that can be used largely, men of inspiration, divinely prepared for their great work, like Aholiab and Bezaleel, the builders of the tabernacle. They are the blessed overcomers, the inheritors of this world and the next, in the spiritual likeness of the

God of true conquerors, the great Lord and builder of the kingdom in which they are all laboring.

The secret of Wycliffe's life, as it was the aspiration of his people, was that hunger after righteousness, which is the central Beatitude and the leading fact in the development of the universe. He was true to himself, to the truth, to his mission, to his people, to his country, patriotic, loyal to the kingdom of England and to the kingdom of God. He had the moral uprightness, that clearness of moral vision which comes from and adds a stimulus in the pursuit of truth and a devotion to the welfare of men. The character of the soul counts in the search for truth, for faith is an enlightening factor, and more of reverence means more of knowledge. We must patiently wait with open mind for nature or grace to reveal their deepest secrets. Wycliffe was a man who inspired trust and led the people to place their hopes in him. He had confidence in the triumph of the truth, the devotion to the highest good which develops character, intelligence, perseverance, faith, victory.

> "Let knowledge grow from more to more,
> And more of reverence in us dwell;"

for it leads to ever higher revelations of the truth and greater clearness of moral insight. These dreamers of the good time coming, when universal righteousness shall reign, go into the holy of holies,

and an angel meets them there and reveals the coming of the kingdom. There God meets them in holy fellowship, and expresses Himself to mankind through them, for they are fitted most adequately to represent Him.

Great men are the same in all ages, with the same strivings of reason and conscience against tradition and authority, as Socrates and Plato, Paul and Luther, Carlyle and Emerson. These great men, apparently born out of due time, of whom the world is not worthy and for whom it was not ready, are not objects of pity but of admiration. They are wiser than their times, and embody the principles which make their age valuable in the history of the race. The persecutions which they suffer are only some of the forces which make them the world's redeemers. Our sympathy is needed, not for Wycliffe but for the ignorant, bigoted ecclesiastics who persecuted him. The least deserving of pity are those who know and follow the Truth, enduring even to the death that truth and freedom and humanity may triumph. We do not yet appreciate the force of persecution, the being persecuted for righteousness' sake, on the development of the individual character and the clearness of the moral vision. Persecution opens the eyes, deepens and enriches the nature, purifies the aim and adds an intense zeal for truth and justice. The teaching of all tragedy in literature or in actual life is that suffering gives wisdom, a deep in-

sight into the meaning of life, a devotion to really worthy ends, which no amount of happiness can produce.

When the intellectual nature is turned to justify one's self and one's fellows in evil, oppression, grinding the faces of the poor, not caring for preaching or the people, the images become blurred and the would-be prophets can not see the right or the Godward direction of things. The hierarchy of England became convinced that separation, persecution, bitterness, selfishness, indolent luxury were right, that depriving their fellow-men of money and the truth of God was in some way fulfilling the Divine mission. They admirably illustrated Christ's saying, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness;" their stupid blindness being criminal if judged by any lofty standard. The work of the reformation in England was not completed by Wycliffe, but the fault was not his; it was the fault of the times, of men too ignorant and selfish and narrow to see the dawn of the new day, of what was possible to intelligence and courage to free people from tyranny, of what belongs to their welfare. It is an awful mistake of the leaders of a nation not to use the openings of Providence, or to be false to God-given opportunities. Like the Israelites who must wander forty years in the wilderness till suffering had taught them wisdom and courage and political sagacity, so the people of England must yet suffer two cen-

turies before the aristocracy would join with the leaders of the Commons in a national effort for freedom.

There is a permanence, an expansive force, an abiding fruitfulness in the work of the men of the kingdom. Wycliffe was not only the harbinger of the Reformation, the Morning Star, but men are seeing in him the real founder of the great Teutonic revolt from Rome, the dawn of the new day for Western Europe. The sun that rises so brilliantly may go behind a heavy bank of clouds for a full hour or two, but it keeps on ascending the heavens and noonday is at last here. Wycliffe's teachings were the true genesis of the Protestant Reformation—the sole authority of the Scriptures, the right of civil rulers to control ecclesiastical appointments, the human origin of the papacy, the universal priesthood of believers. These principles and the Gospel he so dearly loved and so faithfully preached finally conquered England, much as Christianity did the Roman Empire. Providence is on the side of these men of intellect and moral earnestness, of larger vision, of more human spirit, or truer soul; and the world wakens to find in them a new regenerating force. Wycliffe was the most efficient leader in the age-long work of taking the Church from the prelates and restoring it to the people, as has been done with the English kingdom and Oxford University. The obscurantists, the men who mistake dullness of perception for loyalty

to truth, piled his name under a mass of calumny, like the stones heaped upon Absalom's tomb, but the very loftiness of the pile led investigators to search underneath for the great man who was buried there. Clement of Alexandria, Wycliffe, Zwingle and Wesley are the true apostolic succession through whom the spirit of the Gospel has been preserved to the world. It has been a long, hard task to bring freedom to men, a greater labor than Prometheus stealing fire from heaven. It seems like Sisyphus' attempts to roll the stone up the hill, but some day a mighty man of the Teutonic race will heave the stone over the crest, and all the sons of God will again shout for joy.

These men of the kingdom have made it a bigger thing to live, to be a man, have redeemed human life from any taint of littleness, and God from the imputation of blundering for having created the race. They are men who have shown what it is to be created in the Divine image, or what the Spirit can make of a man. By the richness and many-sidedness of their lives they push further apart the walls of fate and give men room to grow. We need no images to aid our faith, or wall pictures to aid our worship, for we find all our aid and inspiration in Jesus Christ, and in the men of the kingdom who have glorified his person and work. All true reformers are of much the same mettle, bred in the same atmosphere, of much the same spirit, and use much the same means of building the kingdom.

In strength of manhood, in sincerity of purpose, in the value of the work done, and in his wisdom and planning for the future, Wycliffe was without a peer in his century, and with few, if any, superiors in any time. Since his day men have been working out his theories and applying them to government, the Church, society, and their application in larger measure is still the problem of the age. Those who labor for worldly honor are abundant and rewarded, but the men who labor for the good of their race, the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed, and labor so wisely that the chains are constantly more and more broken as the years roll on, are worthy the profoundest gratitude of every age and race.

We must judge Wycliffe by his times and his contemporaries, among whom he stands as a man of insight and influence. A man must be judged by the way he uses his opportunities, and by the way he stands up for the truth as then revealed. His relation to justice, to love, to the highest interests of the race, determines his final value. There are always certain truths which need emphasizing, certain work which the world wants done, and a man's real worth is determined by his relation to these truths, and by how effectually he accomplishes his work. The great men of all ages are very much the same, for manhood does not change in the essential elements. Abraham and Moses, Socrates and Plato, Cæsar and Charlemagne, Alfred and

Cyrus the Great, Luther, Wycliffe, Wesley, Washington, Lincoln, the great elements of character are to be found in all. We do not need to seek what made them great, they were great, and used the circumstances of the times to express their inherent greatness. They were possessed of energy, insight, the power of initiative, of getting things done, of meeting the world's needs and accomplishing them for the good of humanity. The god-like heroes on the plains of Troy, in whom a God was incarnate as the inspiration of their lives, was a symbol of the incarnation of Christ in the heart of these Christian warriors.

It requires a significant kind of a man to appreciate men like Wycliffe. He must belong to the sons of the kingdom if he is going to detect and understand the work of the men of the kingdom. He must have a certain measure of Christ's spirit and must be in sympathy with the work of the leader and the spirit in which he labors. We inquire how much of Christ's spirit was in a man, how much of it was expressed in his life, and the answer depends largely on how much there is in our own lives. The eye is made for beauty and light, and light and beauty for the eye, but the visual image must be accurate. Christ is the measure of all manhood and of all endeavor, and unless His image is formed on our consciousness our judgment will not be righteous or our standard perfect.

The problem of each age is to adequately express Him to that age, and the value of a man's life depends on how fully he has done this. We have a measure to measure man with, but it is so large, so wide, so deep, so many-sided, that accurate judgment is difficult, to tell how far a man was Christ-like. There is a large element of the essential Christ in these men, and each of them illustrates some characteristic of their common Master. They reveal Christ as He revealed the Father, and make His life comprehensible to the multitude, since it is so beautifully and strongly incarnated in them. These are the men who see farther and deeper than others, men who are not always consistent, who are hard to judge and yet who really do the world's work. If their faces were gathered in a circle above our heads, like Sir Joshua Reynolds' angels, as we looked through and beyond them the composite picture formed by the outlines of their features would be like that of the Son of man.